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# EDITORIAL

##264 SEP 2015

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Print Media Management

'Innovation in Publishing' Award 2005 - Highly Commended

ACE Press Awards

'Circulation Excellence and Endeavour' - Gold, 2008

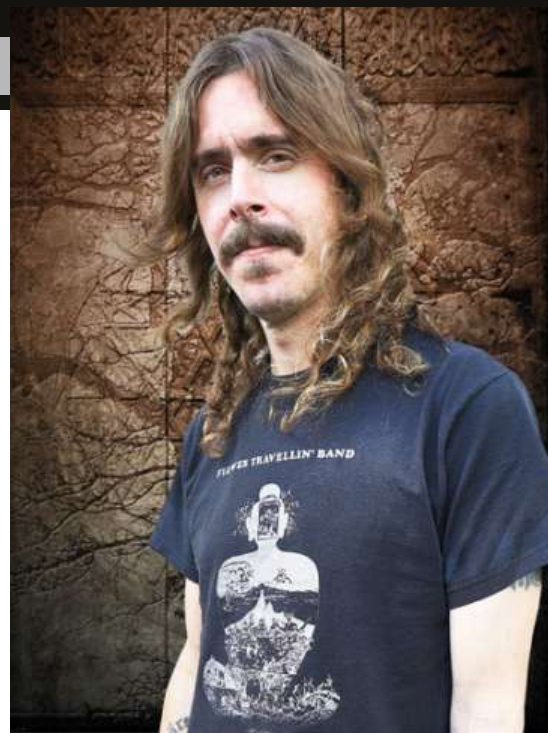


**M**y first encounter with Mikael Åkerfeldt has always stayed in my memory throughout my professional career. It was while I was working at another metal publication that the Swede answered the phone and promptly announced that he was in the middle of hoovering his flat. We did go on to talk about how 'Still Life' was inspired by his Mikael's love of concept albums and King Diamond, but it was his brutal honesty and myth-busting image he created from the get go that always impressed me. Mikael is one of the few musicians who pulls no punches, tells it how it is, and there are no smoke and mirrors in his interviews. So here I am, working for another publication and for the second time during my time here, putting this great man on the cover. It's always a pleasure and it's been great to reminisce, personally and of course with Mikael, about Opeth's musical adventures and journeys. It's been great to go back and listen to the early years, the breakthrough latter day albums and of course the ground breaking duo of 'Deliverance' and 'Damnation', which I remember were largely ignored by key areas of the rock press on their first arrival. Thank you MFN for reissuing these bad boys!

So it gives me great pleasure to say I really hope you enjoy reading Terrorizer's nostalgic look at Opeth's career. And as always we hope you enjoy reading our other features on all the best new and classic extreme music.

See you next month!

**DARREN SADLER**



COVER PIC: MARIE KORNER

WHAT TEAM TERRORIZER HAVE BEEN SCARING THE NEIGHBOURS WITH THIS MONTH...



**MIRANDA YARDLEY**

(PUBLISHER)

**THE MEN THAT WILL NOT BE...  
'NOT YOUR TYPICAL VICTORIAN'**  
(LEATHER APRON)



**DARREN SADLER**

(CONSULTANT EDITOR)

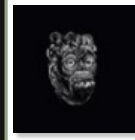
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(SELF-RELEASE)



**JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS**

(SENIOR WRITER)

**VVOVND\$  
'DESCENDING FLESH'**  
(HYPERTENSION RECORDS)

STAFF CUTS



ISSUE 265 ON SALE 17TH OCTOBER



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pic: ESTER SEGARRA



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*Free Range Riffs*

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pic: Marie Komer

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NEWS FROM THE

# HEAVY METAL

EDITED BY KEZ WHELAN

## METAL ALLEGIANCE

## METAL SUPERGROUP HITS THE DECKS

“WE ARE A BRAND NOT A BAND”

A year ago music industry insider and bassist Mark Menghi found himself on Mötörhead's Mötörboat tour, having assembled a group of musicians including Testament's Alex Skolnick, Megadeth's Dave Ellefson and ex-Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy to play a selection of classic metal tracks. Whilst sailing past Cuba, the gang hatched a plan to create original material with an all-star cast. “That was Metal Allegiance's first show. The next day the boat was supposed to dock but there was a really bad storm so we couldn't and we were circling round for hours

just talking. Right then we got the idea we should write the record. This is before our governments settled their differences. We were talking about music and politics and all these crazy ideas! Dave, Mike and I have known each other a very long time. Alex I got to know a year later. He's a freaking genius. A month later we started writing at Mike Portnoy's house!”

The end result is an album that features some of metal's most prolific artists including Philip H. Anselmo, Chuck Billy, D. Randall Blythe, Phil Demmel, Jamey Jasta, Andreas Kisser, Troy Sanders and Ben Weinman amongst many more.

He continues: “We knew we couldn't have 25 writers on the record or it would take 25 years! We got together in December and wrote five songs and the same thing the next month. Six sessions gave birth to nine songs. No music was written for any specific singer or guitarist, we wrote it all first then decided who we wanted to be on the record.

“The song Chuck [Billy] appeared on, ‘Can't Kill The Devil’, was very special to me as I wrote the lyrics for it. It's very personal to me and I knew Chuck would kill it. I was jumping up and down like a two year old when I heard it. It's about hitting



# BULLET POINTS

Feral Canadian black metallers **Revenge** will be releasing their highly anticipated fifth full-length this November through Season Of Mist. The album will be called 'Behold. Total.Rejection.' and promises to be just as skin-flayingly intense and batshit insane as the rest of their

uncompromising discography.  
[www.Facebook.com/RevengeOfficialSoMPage](http://www.Facebook.com/RevengeOfficialSoMPage)

Morose Finnish doom troupe **Swallow The Sun** have announced their new record will span not one, not two, but three whole discs – well, unless you opt for the vinyl edition of course, in which you'll

have five hefty slabs of wax to contend with instead. The album, 'Songs From The North', is due to be released on November 13th via Century Media.

[www.Facebook.com/SwallowTheSun](http://www.Facebook.com/SwallowTheSun)

To celebrate their upcoming European tour together, atmospheric German sludge crew **The Ocean** and Japanese post-rock collective **Mono** will be releasing

a split LP entitled 'Transcendental'. The Ocean's contribution is a 13-minute song entitled 'The Quiet Observer', whilst Mono offer up the 11-minute 'Death In Reverse'. Both bands play the Electric Ballroom in London on November 6th, and Damnation Festival in Leeds on November 7th.

[www.Facebook.com/TheOceanCollective](http://www.Facebook.com/TheOceanCollective)  
[www.Facebook.com/MonoOfJapan](http://www.Facebook.com/MonoOfJapan)



rock bottom and having all your rights taken from you by the government and trying to fight back. The other was 'Dying Song' with Phillip [Anselmo]. He was involved with us from day one so we gave him a clean slate. He is the only singer who wrote their own lyrics for this project. He's an amazing singer and an amazing human too! Randy and I wrote the lyrics for 'Gift Of Pain' an hour before we recorded them and Troy [Sanders] gave his track a Pink Floyd feel which took it to a totally different, but very cool place."

Such a line-up will whet the appetite of metalheads worldwide and fortunately there are plans to tour. Metal Allegiance shows have seen surprise appearances from greats like Geezer Butler and Mark isn't ruling out more in the future. "We just booked Loudpark in Japan and we will be heading to Europe very soon. You never know what you're going to get from a Metal Allegiance gig. Geezer Butler, Cliff Burton and Steve Harris are my musical heroes. I was working with Heaven And Hell and got to know Geezer so we were fortunate to have him come and jam with us."

Mark tells Terrorizer that there are already plans for a follow up. "There is a huge list of people we would like to work with e.g. James Hetfield, Bruce Dickinson and Rob Halford. Alex and I are half way done writing the second record. This is not a one and done thing! We are a brand not a band! I called Frank Bello (Anthrax) up yesterday, geeking out over a Steve Harris bassline. We are all huge music fans and that's why we do this!"

**Words: Darren Sadler**

The album is out now on Nuclear Blast  
[www.Facebook.com/MetalAllegianceTour](http://www.Facebook.com/MetalAllegianceTour)



## SCREAM BLOODY GORE! AUTOPSY RELEASE NEW GOODIES...

*November promises to be a gore-infested month with the release of not one but two new gems from Oakland's finest Autopsy.*



"We've got a boxset coming out on Peaceville," vocalist/drummer Chris Reifert reveals. "It's going to be four CDs, loaded with all kinds of stuff. It'll have a new mini-LP, a couple of CDs worth of studio tracks from all of our releases – albums, EPs, singles and stuff, also some rehearsal stuff that no one's ever heard, we actually just found it recently. I had never even heard it until now! It will also come with a book, 100 pages with the story of the band, lots of interviews, tons and tons of pictures... we went through all our old picture boxes and found loads of good stuff. It's going to be called 'After The Cutting'."

"There's no special occasion or anything, just a good idea that we liked. The stuff we found was mostly rehearsals from the 'Fiend For Blood' EP material, but also tapes with the entire 'Acts Of The Unspeakable' album in rehearsal form. We couldn't fit the whole thing on the discs, but we took what songs we could off of that. It was a very good discovery. The live stuff we knew about, it's material from the last two shows we did in Oakland, it's definitely more recent, but the sound is quite good, it deserves to be heard and I think that people who like the band will be into it."

The package will feature artwork from Kev Walker – famed for his work on both 'Severed Survival' and 'Mental Funeral', while new album 'Skullgrinder' – which is the second release – will feature artwork by Wes Benscoter.

Of the new release, Chris said: "The album has got nothing to do with thinking about the old days, really. We have a similar mindset every time we go record – just try to do the best record we can make, the heaviest record that we can. Play as good as we can and get the best sound we can get. It sounds really similar to the last couple of albums, in terms of sound and production; we're still working with Adam Mufioz, he knows us very well and what we want from the songs, so it's really cool to work with him. In terms of material, it's seven brand new songs. It's technically called a mini-LP, it's seven songs in 28 minutes, but you can call it what you want. 'Reign In Blood' is one of the best albums ever and it's 28 minutes long, so... we were told by Peaceville it has to be called a mini-LP, so be it, but it doesn't matter to us. It's new material and it sounds like us, so we're really happy. Every time we record something new it sounds to us like the best thing we've ever done, and that happened this time too, which tells me we're on the right track."

[www.AutopsyDeathMetal.com](http://www.AutopsyDeathMetal.com)





**"There's a special kind of grimness that only comes from waking up hungover in a hot tent"**

## BAR-BARIAN WRATH BAST

**AFTER THEIR TRIUMPHANT SET AT THIS YEAR'S BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL, WE CAUGHT UP WITH BLACKENED DOOM POWER TRIO **BAST** TO DOWN A FEW ALES AND DISCUSS LIFE ON THE ROAD...**

### PLAYING BLOODSTOCK

**Gavin [Thomas, bass]:** "It was fucking awesome!"

**Craig [Bryant, vocals & guitar]:** "Really enjoyed it, it was a pretty big crowd and everyone seemed pretty responsive."

**Jon [Lee, drums & vocals]:** "A lot of friendly faces down there too, which was cool."

**Craig:** "Yeah absolutely. That's our job done now, so we get to enjoy the whole thing. We've got a few of our friends here, like Conan, Hang The Bastard, Pist, Ageless Oblivion..."

**Jon:** "Agalloch tomorrow! Can't wait for that."

**Gavin:** "Yeah, and Death are playing! It'll be like being thirteen years old again, listening to Death in my room and playing Diablo 2. [laughs]"

### TIPS FOR FESTIVAL SURVIVAL

**Craig:** "Try and play early. At Roadburn we arrived on Wednesday and we weren't playing until 8PM on the Sunday, so we got horrendously fucked up..."

**Jon:** "...and spent three days paying for it!"

**Craig:** "Yeah, all the hangovers condensed on the Sunday, then we had to go on and play for an hour. It was pretty brutal."

**Jon:** "Just pack an essential beer bong for as soon as you're done. That's a must!"

### TOURING WITH PALLBEARER

**Gavin:** "We did seventeen days in total, it was amazing. The second leg was great, going from Norway all the way down to Italy in a European heat wave."

**Jon:** "Pallbearer were excellent dudes too. There's a lot of commonality between us, a lot of similar interests."

**Gavin:** "Punbearer. [laughs]"

**Jon:** "Yeah, they were just endlessly making terrible puns."

**Craig:** "They showed us how it was done, every night. They just really brought it."

### BEST/WORST FESTIVAL EXPERIENCES

**Jon:** "Waking up in tents hungover is definitely the worst, hands down — for everyone, regardless of who you are. There's a special kind of grimness that only comes from waking up hungover in a hot tent. That's actually what our van was like, for the entire tour!"

**Craig:** "For the best... To be honest, when we played Roadburn, we played an hour set and it was a full room, and that was a pretty indescribable feeling. When we got off, we all just felt so high — and not in the normal kind of Roadburn way! [laughs] I don't think we've had any bad festival experiences to be honest, I know that sounds so clichéd, but they've all been fucking excellent."

**Gavin:** "We're just happy to be asked to play. Pretty much every festival we've done, like Damnation, Roadburn, Into The Void in Leeuwarden with Amenra and Kadavar, that was amazing... And now Bloodstock! It's been great."

**Craig:** "The organisation is impeccable at every single one. Bloodstock has been one of the best actually, they're really on it, they absolutely know what they're doing. It's been such a

great experience, we're just a little shit-muncher band really, but they're used to dealing with real bands! [laughs]"

### ALBUM NUMBER TWO

**Craig:** "We've got a lot of ideas, we've got one song that's pretty much there. We played half of it today — we could only squeeze half in as it's quite long! But yeah, we've got a few other ideas we're piecing together and they seem to be coming along well."

**Do you get much writing done whilst you're on tour?**

**Craig:** "Absolutely not. [laughs]"

**Gavin:** "Yeah, it takes a long time."

**Jon:** "We usually end up slaving over stuff."

**Craig:** "With the doom stuff as well, I think it's difficult to write and make decisions on things when you haven't got a big backline behind you. When you've just got a little laptop, you can come up with a few riffs, but you don't get that power..."

**Jon:** "...or the feel."

**Craig:** "Or the feel!"

**Jon:** "Yeah, that doesn't translate."

**Craig:** "No, it certainly doesn't. You kind of need a studio, I think. Well, we do anyway, I'm sure there are much better bands that can just write opuses in their van. But we're not that good, so we have to put the time in and study it."

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# DAMNATION FESTIVAL 2015

## AT THE GATES

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# studio report

Artist: **Conan**

Title: **Tba**

Studio: **Skyhammer Studio**

Producer: **Chris Fielding**

Release Date: **Early 2016**

Label: **Napalm**



**~ has he managed to adapt to the Conan pace?**

"Totally, he's a very accomplished musician. Not just on drums, although that's probably his main instrument. He's a great drummer, and seriously talented, and a great lad. Farts a bit too much, to be honest with you, but aside from that he fits in really well. He's basically a perfect fit for the band - the touring has been a pleasure, the recording has been a pleasure, and we're just really excited to get next year started now and start touring the new material for the new album. The change of personnel hasn't affected us in a negative way, it's always been planned. Band members will come and go, that's normal, but fortunately we've been able to do really well in spite of that, so it's not been a problem."

**Was most of the record written before Chris and Rich joined?**

"No, this one has been written with all three of us. Probably for the first time actually, all three members have been in the room at the same time as the songs have been written. Usually in the past it would be me and maybe the drummer, but on this album we've all been there during the writing of every song. It's been really enjoyable, it's a new way of doing it, but it's worked, totally."

**Do you think that's changed the sound at all?**

"Maybe it's made the sound more accomplished, because we're paying a bit more attention to the structure of the songs and things like that, but I guess for the end result, we'll have to wait until it comes out to decide. The demos so far are sounding really good though, really excited about it!"

**What are you doing for artwork this time round?**

"It's the same guy, Tony Roberts, he does all our artwork and it would take an earthquake or something for us to change our minds! He lives in Oklahoma so unless he gets picked up by a cyclone or something, we'll be using him for all our artwork going into the future. He's a great guy, we're really good friends, he understands us and his artwork's amazing, so it's perfect. I really like when bands have a continuity to their artwork, especially when it's good artwork, and Tony's a great artist. Every time he sends me ideas through, they're all really good, so it's hard for me to choose. The sketches he's come up for this one so far, have been really, really cool." 🐼

[www.HailConan.com](http://www.HailConan.com)



**How's the new record coming along? How much of it is done?**

"We're recording it at Skyhammer Studio, which is our own studio. It's where we recorded 'Blood Eagle', it's where Electric Wizard did their latest album, as did Hooded Menace, Bast, Serpent Venom... I could go on but I won't! It's looking like it's going to be between 40-45 minutes, so it'll fit on one record, which is always our mode of operation, and it's sounding really good."

**How would you say the album compares to 'Blood Eagle' and 'Monnos'?**

"You can tell it's us, maybe the sound is going to be a little bit more of a raw sound this time. Not totally over that way, but we'll migrate towards that a little, in how it's mixed and stuff like that, but that's Chris [Fielding]'s domain. If you're into Conan, you'll love the album. If you're not into Conan, you might love the album if you didn't already like us!"

**Speaking of Chris Fielding, he's playing bass for you now, right? How's that been going?**

"Amazing! I knew it would go well, because he's a

very good musician and he's a very good composer as well. He's a good friend of mine, so we get on well. He can be a bit grumpy sometimes, a bit short tempered, but I can be really annoying, so I guess we go well together! Musically, we fit really well, because he sings in a lower range to me so it kinda works sonically, so we're exploring that a bit more on the new stuff."

**Does that make this the first record that Chris has played on and produced simultaneously?**

"That's a good question! He was in a band called Agent Of The Morai growing up, and I think he will have been on [those records] and produced them at the same time. The pair of us contributed to a track that was done by Slomatics too, they did a split with Holly Hunt, a seven inch. That was on my label as well, Black Bow Records, and Chris played on and recorded that too. He can do it, press the buttons with one hand... he knows the score. [laughs]"

**Your new drummer Rich Lewis is more well known for playing death metal with bands like Flayed Disciple and Intensive Square**



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# ON THIS MONTH'S FEAR CANDY

AS THE FINAL QUARTER OF 2015 LOOMS, WE HAVE ANOTHER LUCKY THIRTEEN TRACKS OF BRUTALITY FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE...

## 1. ABHORRENT DECIMATION

'Miasmic Mutation' from the self-released album 'Miasmic Mutation'  
We start this month's Fear Candy with some destructive death metal courtesy of London five piece Abhorrent Decimation, 'Miasmic Mutation' being the title track from the band's first full-length album of the same name, which is out right now. The band will be embarking on a mini-tour of the UK and Ireland over the first few weeks of October.  
[www.Facebook.com/AbhorrentDecimation](http://www.Facebook.com/AbhorrentDecimation)

## 2. KRYSHTLA

'H+' from the Initiate Audio and Media album 'A War Of Souls And Desires'  
Featuring four former members of Gutworm and former Deadeye vocalist Adi Mayes, 'H+' delivers exactly the type of uncompromising, intense extreme metal you'd expect from such a pedigree and is representative of the band's sound on their debut album, which has just been released. Enjoy this five minute shock to the system!  
[www.Facebook.com/Krysthla](http://www.Facebook.com/Krysthla)

## 3. NUCLEUST

'Faith by The Sword' the self-released single  
From the world's most remote city, Perth in Australia, Nucleust represent a delicate blend of progressive technical metal, unusual rhythms and extreme savagery with a political message they believe is applicable to every human on the planet.  
[www.Facebook.com/NucleustBand](http://www.Facebook.com/NucleustBand)

## 4. ONE MACHINE

'Screaming for Light' from the Scarlet Records album 'The Final Cull'  
Formed by guitarist/ songwriter Steve Smyth (Nevermore, Forbidden, Dragonlord, Vicious Rumors) and featuring a line-up of extreme metal lifers, One Machine mix power metal and thrash with a distinctive groove. The band's second album 'Screaming for Light' is released this month.  
[www.Facebook.com/OneMachineOfficial](http://www.Facebook.com/OneMachineOfficial)

## 5. QUANTANA

'Break Free' the self-released single  
This Scottish four-piece hail from the Shetland Islands. The band have thus far released a couple of EPs including 'Harmonising the Devil', their debut. Having been together a couple of years now, the band are looking for shows on the UK mainland.  
[www.Facebook.com/Quantana2012](http://www.Facebook.com/Quantana2012)

## 6. COUNTING DAYS

'Liberated Sounds' from the Mascot Label Group album "  
Counting Days comprises former members of TRC, Heights, Rough Hands and Last Witness, they mix hardcore, thrash and metal core. 'Liberated Sounds' itself was produced by Fredrik Nordstrom (Arch Enemy, In Flames, Opeth and others).  
[www.Facebook.com/Countingdaysuk](http://www.Facebook.com/Countingdaysuk)



Artwork: KEN COLEMAN (WWW.ARTOKENCOLEMAN.COM)

## 7. AM:PM

'Rise Of The Mummies' the self-released single.  
Swiss melodic deathcore five piece have been gigging for around four years. 'Rise of the Mummies' is only the band's second release after their 2014 EP 'Aberrant Minds Provoke Murders', and shows the band know how to mix great guitar lines with the growliest of vocals.  
[www.Facebook.com/AMPM.Metal](http://www.Facebook.com/AMPM.Metal)

## 8. BURIED REALM

'Through These Darkened Halls' from the self-released EP 'The Ichor Carcinoma'  
'Through These Darkened Halls' is the first single to be taken from the Buried Realm's debut EP 'The Ichor Carcinoma'. The band itself is the solo project of multi-instrumentalist Josh Dummer. This track was itself mastered by Dan Swanö and features Christopher Amott (Armageddon, ex-Arch Enemy).  
[www.Facebook.com/BuriedRealm](http://www.Facebook.com/BuriedRealm)

## 9. WINTERBLIND

'Genetic Algorithm' from the self-released album 'Ya Mashina'  
Belgian band Winterblind started in 2006 when the band members were only teenagers. The band have shown themselves open-minded to sonic experimentation, and their debut album 'Ya Mashina' offers an interesting take on progressive black metal.  
[www.Facebook.com/WinterblindBand](http://www.Facebook.com/WinterblindBand)

## 10. ANGEL OF SODOM

'Entry Denied' from the self-released album 'Divine Retribution'  
Hailing from the emotionally-barren climes of Helsinki, Finland, 80s style retro thrashers Angel of Sodom have just released 'Divine Retribution', a collection of apocalyptic, aggressive old-school thrash the way it used to be done.  
[www.Facebook.com/AngelOfSodom](http://www.Facebook.com/AngelOfSodom)



ABHORRENT DECIMATION

PIC: GREIG CLIFFORD

## 11. FATHER AND SON

'Anno Domini Satanicus' from the Klubb Super 8 Fonogram single 'Unholy Ghost'  
Father and Son have an interesting line-up, combining two father and son pairs and a non-family member on vocals. The band itself make interesting old-school rock, with 'Anno Domini Satanicus' itself a paean to all that is unholy and best listened to with the lights out...  
[www.Facebook.com/FatherAndSonSWE](http://www.Facebook.com/FatherAndSonSWE)

## 12. SEXY

'Supernova Queen' from the Ambulance Recordings album "Shout For Sexy!"  
Incredibly modest and self-restrained Swiss hard rockers Sexy have been around since late 2011 and produce hot and sweaty heavy rock 'n' roll with a nod to some of the great classic rockers.  
[www.Facebook.com/SexyTheBand](http://www.Facebook.com/SexyTheBand)

## 13. ARCHI DEEP AND THE MONKEYSHAKERS

'Nowhere Man' from the self-released album '#3'  
Of course, 'Band Name of the Month' goes to France's Archi Deep and the Monkeyshakers. The three-piece make groovy heavy rock with catchy melodies and a reassuringly retro sound. 'Nowhere Man' is the band's first single off their new album, '#3'.  
[www.Facebook.com/ArchiDeep](http://www.Facebook.com/ArchiDeep)



KRYSHTLA



# ON THIS MONTH'S FEAR CANDY BRAZIL

TERRORIZER HAS ALWAYS LOOKED AROUND THE WORLD TO BRING YOU NEW AND INTERESTING EXTREME METAL, AND WITH 'CARNIVAL OF CARNAGE' WE ARE BRINGING YOU SOME GREAT EXAMPLES OF THE MUSIC THAT IS PRESENTLY BEING MADE IN BRAZIL....

## 1. TORTURE SQUAD

'No Escape From Hell' from the self-released album 'Esquadrão de Tortura'  
Death thrashers Torture Squad recorded their first demo tape 'A Soul in Hell' in August 1993, and have since recorded seven studio albums and a live album as well as touring Brazil as well as South America and Europe. 'No Escape from Hell' is the first track on their most recent album, 'Esquadrão de Tortura'.  
[www.Facebook.com/TortureSquad](http://www.Facebook.com/TortureSquad)

## 2. DARK SLUMBER

'Sorrowful Winter Breeze' from the Black Legion Productions album 'Dead Inside'  
Rio de Janeiro's Dark Slumber was formed in 2011. They make gloomy, melancholic music with themes such as self-destruction, depression and 'anti-cosmic philosophy'. The band has just released their first album 'Dead Inside'.  
[www.Facebook.com/DarkSlumber](http://www.Facebook.com/DarkSlumber)

## 3. BLAZING DOG

'Deus Ex Machina' from the self-released CD/DVD 'Age Of The Beast'  
Blazing Dog formed in 2004 and have just released a DVD which has re-recorded versions of music from their debut album, 2009's 'Metallic Beast', as well as four new tracks.  
[www.Facebook.com/BlazingDog](http://www.Facebook.com/BlazingDog)

## 4. GENOCIDIO

'Kill Brazil' from the Urubuz Records album 'In Love With Hatred'  
Genocidio have been around since 1987, when they released their first demo 'Fall of Heaven'. Since then they have released seven albums and supported Venom, Obituary, Amon Amarth and Destruction.  
[www.Facebook.com/GenocidioBr](http://www.Facebook.com/GenocidioBr)

## 5. ACLLA

'Seeds of Tomorrow' from the self-released album 'Pindorama'  
Aclla mixes indigenous Brazilian music with what they describe as a 'praising the Earth' attitude. Their first album 'Landscape Revolution' was released in 2009 with their latest release 'Pindorama' the band have created a fusion of metal and native Brazilian music, with a definite Iron Maiden vibe.  
[www.Facebook.com/AcllaBand](http://www.Facebook.com/AcllaBand)

## 6. ARMAHDA

'Canudos' from the self-released album 'Armahda'  
Armahda's eponymous debut album was released in December 2013 and have opened for Sabbath and Vicious Rumors. Their music combines a folk element and lyrically describe Brazilian history.  
[www.Facebook.com/Armahda](http://www.Facebook.com/Armahda)

## 7. SIRIUN

'Transmutation' from the self-released album 'In Chaos We Trust'  
Sirium mix up thrash, death, groove and progressive metal with the use of interesting melodies and extreme brutality. The band was founded by guitarist/vocalist Alexandre Castellan and the band's debut album, 'In Chaos We Trust', features Kevin Talley (Suffocation, Six Feet Under, Daath) on drums.  
[www.Facebook.com/SiriunBand](http://www.Facebook.com/SiriunBand)

## 8. ASTAFIX

'The Scourge' from the self-released album 'Internal Saboteur'  
São Paulo's Astafix released their first album 'End Ever' in 2009 and have just released their follow-up album 'Internal Saboteur' which as this track shows contains some fast and brutal heavy metal.  
[www.Facebook.com/Astafix1](http://www.Facebook.com/Astafix1)



Artwork: ED RODRIGUES

## 9. SUPERSONIC BREWER

'End Times' from the MS Metal Records album 'Overthrow the Bastard'  
Thrashers SuperSonic Brewer are from Bento Gonçalves and have been around since 2004. They released their debut album 'Broken Bones' in 2011 and in 2014 released the Emani Savaris-produced 'Overthrow the Bastard'.  
[www.Facebook.com/SupersonicBrewer](http://www.Facebook.com/SupersonicBrewer)

## 10. PROJECT46

'Erro +55' from the Wikimetal Music album 'Que Seja Feita a Nossa Vontade'  
Project46's 'Erro +55' is the third track off their second and most recent album, 2014's 'Que Seja Feita a Nossa Vontade'. Known for their politically controversial lyrics and energetic live performance, Project46 is representative of the modern South American metal scene and have played to thousands at festivals like 2015's Rock in Rio, 2013's Monsters of Rock in São Paulo and Chile's Maquinaria Festival in 2012.  
[www.Facebook.com/Project46](http://www.Facebook.com/Project46)

## 11. THE SOUTHERN BLACKLIST

'We Shall Rise' the self-released single  
Formed in 2014 in Belo Horizonte, The Southern Blacklist was formed by former Sepultura guitarist Jairo Guedz, ('Bestial Devastation' and 'Morbid Visions'). The band is in the process of recording of their first EP due to be released in December 2015. The band are planning to tour the UK in 2016, so watch out for them!  
[www.Facebook.com/TheSouthernBlacklist](http://www.Facebook.com/TheSouthernBlacklist)

## 12. EYES OF GAIA

'Hidden From The Light' from the self-released album 'The Power of Existence'  
Melodic metallers Eyes Of Gaia was formed in 2008 by vocalist Mario Kohn and bassist Rodolfo Liberato. They have supported Dragonforce, Almah and the legendary Glenn Hughes and band released 'The Power of Existence' in January 2015. The band re-recorded a new version of the song 'Hidden From The Light' especially inclusion on this CD.  
[www.Facebook.com/EyesOfGaiaOfficial](http://www.Facebook.com/EyesOfGaiaOfficial)

## 13. FÚRIA LOUCA

'Rock Fever' from the Voice Music album 'On The Croup Of The Sinner - Part II'  
Heavy rockers Fúria Louca formed in 2005 yet sound like they came straight from the 80s, not a bad thing at all given they are influenced by bands as Krokus, Accept, Ratt, W.A.S.P. and KISS and do a nice line in thematic guitar riffs and, of course, the power chorus.  
[www.Facebook.com/FuriaLouca](http://www.Facebook.com/FuriaLouca)

## 14. GALLO AZHUU

'Bruxa' the self-released single  
Gallo Azhuu is a groove-laden heavy rock band, sweetly making a continuum between the past and the present to meet invisible worlds, strange creatures and risqué adventures and taking in some big riffs and epic guitar breaks on the way.  
[www.Facebook.com/GalloAzhuuRock](http://www.Facebook.com/GalloAzhuuRock)

## 15. DOCTOR PHEABES

'Seventy Dogs' from the self-released album 'Seventy Dogs'  
Doctor Pheabes originated in 1986 with two pairs of brothers and childhood friends with inspirations such as Van Halen, The Animals, Peter Dinklage and Whitesnake. 'Pheabes' is a fourth incarnation for the Parrillo and Resso brothers, who feel this band has always been there waiting for the right moment to shine.  
[www.Facebook.com/DoctorPheabes](http://www.Facebook.com/DoctorPheabes)

## 16. ABOUT 2 CRASH

'Monster' the self-released single  
About 2 Crash was formed by drummer Aquiles Priestor (Primal Fear, Angra), bassist Luis Mariutti (Shaman, Angra, Andre Matos), guitarist Bill Hudson (Circle II Circle, Jon Oliva), vocalist/producer Theo Vieira, guitarist/co-producer Carlos Anderson and vocalist/DJ Vinicius Neves. Collectively the band play hard, melodic metal. Enjoy!  
[www.Facebook.com/About2CrashBand](http://www.Facebook.com/About2CrashBand)

## 17. POP JAVALI

'Wrath Of The Soul' from the self-released 'The Game Of Fate'  
Pop Javali were formed in 1992 and are a Brazilian melodic hard and heavy power trio. The band will be touring the UK and mainland Europe during October.  
[www.Facebook.com/PopJavali](http://www.Facebook.com/PopJavali)



TORTURE SQUAD



FÚRIA LOUCA



# CHOICE CUTS

BLOODY CHUNKS OF  
THE CULT, THE KVL  
AND THE FRESHLY DEAD



## BIG|BRAVE

***"SIMPLICITY AND MINIMALISM ARE SUCH GREAT  
FIXATIONS OF OURS"***

**K**ifle through the albums comprising the "experimental" section of your local record emporium, and you'll be no closer to defining what experimental actually means when you go out the door than when you came in. While there may be no clear-cut sonic definition, a sense of freedom and a deviation from the typical and linear, along with the propensity to change directions on a whim, are usually attached to the tag. When Robin and Mathieu (both play guitar and sing) originally got together, it was with the intention of playing minimalist "dark/ambient/folk" as a duo. Five years later, Big|Brave's line-up has been expanded to include fellow surname-shy drummer, Louis and the trio is on the cusp of their second full-length (first for Southern Lord), 'Au De La' whilst challenging other Montréal bands for the 'City's Loudest Band' title.


"Early on, we made it a priority to play as quiet as possible," begins Mathieu. "So much so, that when we played live, if anyone talked during our set, they'd be just as loud as us. The tension this created was something we latched on to. What steered the band in another direction is when I 'accidentally' broke Robin's acoustic guitar. She had to borrow an electric

guitar and at that point, we decided to start using the amps I had from playing in louder bands in the past. Having only played at very minimal levels, it felt great to be moving air. I think our contrast and tension is indebted to this. If we had started off as a loud band, amplitude might have been gratuitous instead of being a precious and powerful tool."

'Au De La' is steeped in dynamics; minimalism remains important, but so are earth-rumbling guitar flourishes. Robin's voice gravitates from avant-garde pop clarity to the wails of a pre-exorcised Regan MacNeil. Spacious peals of effects are anchored by cannon-fire drums and a seemingly distorted everything is balanced out by measured classical instrumentation (violin contributions are made by Jessica Moss of Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra) and a Neanderthal-like simplicity. Reference points include Swans, Björk, Diamanda Galás, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Zeni Geva, Low and Monarch!

"While writing the songs for 'Au De La,' the emphasis on heaviness was definitely a priority. As we had also been experimenting with feedback on [debut album] 'Feral Verdu,' we wanted to utilize

it much more on the new songs and really crank up the grittiness. Deconstruction was also one of our top priorities and obsessions. Most of the songs on the album are one-chord songs and utilize very simple and straightforward rhythmic patterns. This was all very intentional as we really wanted see how much we could accomplish with much less. Simplicity and minimalism are such great fixations of ours.

"To put it simply, I would say that Big|Brave is an experimental band," Mathieu says, getting back to categorisation. "We utilize a standard 'rock band' set up, minus a bass player, but it's in the way we use these tools that makes us experimental. And maybe experimental isn't even that accurate of a description. I would say that 'deconstructive' better describes our approach to song writing. We are influenced by so many different kinds of music as well as non-musical art forms that I don't think we'll ever belong to a given category. So, to answer your initial question, my answer is: Big|Brave is a 'deconstructed-experimental-uncategorisable-rock-band.'" 

KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

'Au De La' is out now on Southern Lord  
[www.BigBrave.ca](http://www.BigBrave.ca)





# CALIGULA'S HORSE

*"MUSIC COMMUNICATES IN A WAY THAT IS BEYOND LANGUAGE"*


**N**amed after the infamous steed of Roman emperor Caligula, Australia's Caligula's Horse have been building serious momentum since 2013's 'The Tide, The Thief And River's End'. Live appearances

alongside the likes of Opeth and Protest The Hero have bolstered the band's global reputation and for the band's latest opus, 'Bloom', the expectations could not be greater.

"There were definitely greater expectations,

but we don't tend to think about that when we are writing," explains vocalist Jim Grey. "We lock ourselves away and we try to make music that we enjoy and meets the criteria that we set for ourselves, you just sit down and choose what you want to write about and try to capture that."

Unlike the previous record that was laced in themes of isolation and despair, 'Bloom' unfolds into a journey exploring the beauty of human emotion and colour.

"'Bloom' is deliberately not a concept album. Each of the songs themselves have their own inspiration but some of the themes that are explored are love and lust to standing one's ground and facing great adversity. There are some polar opposites, we can have songs that are angry and aggressive but it is still colourful," explains Jim. "I think it was a natural thing that happened because it tends to be hard to write, I don't generally like to write lyrics about my own experiences, it can feel a little bit forced. We always have a story in mind, there is always trying to get into the head of a character and the emotion in a particular moment and we try to capture that. I feel we have an opportunity here through music to communicate in a way that is beyond language." 

JAMES WEAVER

'Bloom' is out now on InsideOut  
[www.CaligulasHorse.com](http://www.CaligulasHorse.com)



## INTENSIVE SQUARE

**W**henver we come up with something with a weird pulse we try to make sure that it's really heavy and disgusting too," says Matthew Barnes of Wales' Intensive Square. "It's not enough for us if a riff twists around and feels rhythmically and harmonically satisfying – it has to be smothered in crude oil if it's going to make the cut, and we stood by that idea when we were writing the album." 'Anything That Moves', the band's debut, does indeed offer more than much of Intensive Square's polyrhythmic companions – as Barnes' role as guitarist and saxophonist confirms. "I was given a sax as gift and I brought it along to a jam one time," he goes on. "I couldn't play it, but the horrific noises that were coming out of it sounded great over the riffs. We just said 'fuck it' and decided that we were gonna keep it. I guess that sums up part of our approach!" [RT]

[www.Facebook.com/IntensiveSquare](http://www.Facebook.com/IntensiveSquare)



## ABOMINOR

**T**hese young Icelandic black metallers were one of this year's Eistnaflug festival highlights, yet ultimately it turns out their raging, wall-of-sound like performance didn't exactly do justice to the complexity and subtle dissonance of their debut EP, 'Opus: Decay' as they collectively suggest: "Due to the horrible sound and other misfortunes, we wouldn't achieve what we were hoping for. Although unintentional, that wall-of-sound was very fitting for this kind of music though." Composed of only of two long songs, when asked about their taste for the epic, their answer is that they "have no control over how our work unfolds," while dismissing the whole 'Icelandic touch' thing by saying that even if their home is "indeed cold, fascinating and offers something unique in terms of inspiration, it doesn't wholly translate into our work." [OZB]

[Abominor.Bandcamp.com](http://Abominor.Bandcamp.com)



## BLACKQUEEN

**F**ounded by Assück bassist Pete Jay, blackQueen are a world away from that band's death metal-informed grind. blackQueen create a "subconscious film," says Jay, where "the imagination runs wild, creating landscapes from a time when the psyche was fed by the powers of nature." The band play a genuinely spooky and original blend of death metal, horror movie soundtracks and early '70s occult doom... ah, there's that 'o' word. "It's exciting to see more bands taking this angle," says Jay of bands like Ghost et al, "but I hope that people will recognise the difference between pure theatrics, as opposed to those who actually have a message and attitude that supports and works with occult practices." Horror films and magick permeate their music; like a giallo film, "every spell or song has to have a twist." Steel your nerves before listening. [EC]  
[WitchMetal.Bandcamp.com](http://WitchMetal.Bandcamp.com)



# CHOICE CUTS

BLOODY CHUNKS OF  
THE CULT, THE KULT  
AND THE FRESHLY DEAD



Pic: MichaelGardania

## EVIL BLIZZARD

***"MY CURRENT BASS WAS FOUND IN A BIN SO WE'RE  
HARDLY PURISTS ABOUT WHAT WE USE"***

**P**icture the scene – five sinister figures loom above you, each clad in grotesque rubber masks. Four of them wield bass guitars, churning out colossal, murky doom riffs and pulsating space rock grooves, whilst the fifth leaps around clutching a makeshift theremin fashioned from a toy doll's head. Behind sits a sixth masked creature, beating out steady motorik rhythms on the drums and wailing away in a voice that sounds like Genesis P. Orridge attempting to impersonate Ozzy Osbourne getting sucked into a black hole. Suddenly, one of the bass players leaps down in front of you, thrusts their instrument into your hands and beckons you up onstage to partake in the madness. No, this isn't another one of your feverish cheese dreams, but just a standard gig for Preston's most surreal band, Evil Blizzard.


"Some of our favourite gigs are when we support established bands and there's a stunned silence after the first song when people can't make their mind up if they like us or not – we've never had polite applause, put it that

way," grins Stomper, one of the aforementioned bassists. "Crowd participation is important to the band and usually people are either trying to get on the stage or play the basses or attack us," says drummer/vocalist Snide. "The gigs are what it's all about and we've accidentally tapped into something that works with different music fans," continues Stomper. "There's a real air of celebration, a sense of tribe. We usually end up giving our instruments out to the crowd to finish the set and it helps the air of chaos and festivity – at one gig we ended up with no members of Evil Blizzard on stage at the end, all the instruments being played by the audience while we had a sit down."

And as for that creepy baby's head theremin thing? "We're always on the lookout for ridiculous and different objects or instruments," Stomper smiles. "Kav has an extensive collection of pedals and noise creators and I have made my own theremins and synths, though the baby theremin was actually bought from the States. Latest acquisition for me is a custom made bass that is suitably ludicrous. Mind you, my current

bass was found in a bin and so we're hardly purists about what we use."

But hey, it seems to get results – just check out new album 'Everybody Come To Church'. "The new album is so much more accessible than the first," says Snide. "The songs feel more at home together, rather than a random collection that were on the first. The sound is much heavier and I feel it captures at least 80% of the chaos of the live sound. We are all very happy with the new album and think that people who may have not liked or understood the first will really enjoy this. It's a bit more Hawkwind and Sabbath sounding than the first which was to me was always more like Public Image Limited."

Or as Stomper has it, "The band just evolved and got noisier, more heavy and more ridiculous." 

KEZ WHELAN

'Everybody Come To Church' is out now on  
Louder Than War  
[www.EvilBlizzard.com](http://www.EvilBlizzard.com)





## SVALBARD

**"IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO TRIVIALISE A MENTAL ILLNESS LIKE DEPRESSION"**

Svalbard are a self-described "stadium crust" band from Bristol. Their music is melodic, at times anthemic, and littered with blastbeats. When asked about the inspiration for the name, guitarist/vocalist Serena says "We chose the name Svalbard after reading the 'His Dark Materials' trilogy by Phillip Pullman; Svalbard is the setting of an immense battle in the first book. I like to think that our icy, reverby tones would make a fitting soundtrack to the bleak tundra landscape of Svalbard".

Despite the fantastical origins of the name, Svalbard's lyrics often carry hard-hitting social commentary. Album opener 'Perspective' is about "the glamorisation of sadness in alternative music". Serena elaborates further, saying "It is important not to trivialise a mental illness like depression;

because while bands are bragging about their broken hearts, millions of people are suffering in silence with an illness that is hugely stigmatised." And on a lighter note, when the band were asked about whether they have difficulty being a hardcore band and winning over metal crowds, they said: "I don't think metallers are the stubborn, closed-minded crowd they're made out to be. I mean, surely if you love music – you can appreciate it in many forms? Either way, we've experienced a lot of warmth and appreciation at metal shows, which is great. I suppose having blastbeats helps!"

**TOM SAUNDERS**

**'One Day All This Will End' is out now on Holy Roar**

[www.Facebook.com/SvalbardUK](http://www.Facebook.com/SvalbardUK)

## SHRINE OF INSANABILIS

Black metallers Shrine Of Insanabilis' debut album 'Disciples Of The Void' is a voyage into nothingness, one of the main elements which encompasses their entire concept. The band state: "The album depicts a birth and resurrection from the all-encompassing Void – which to us is the foundation and demise of everything. That which we can capture in words can be found in our lyrics. But the more violent, physical side is expressed in the music. Those who want to come on this journey with us should not listen to the album lightly in passing".

[BA]

[www.Facebook.com/ShrineOfInsanabilis](http://www.Facebook.com/ShrineOfInsanabilis)



## MASTIFF

"The only ethos we've ever followed is that it has to be heavy and savage," says Jim, vocalist in Hull sludge quartet Mastiff. "The sound has evolved somewhat, but only becoming a more intense and chaotic version of the original idea." Intense is certainly the word; anyone hanging around the New Blood Stage at this year's Bloodstock will recall their brutal -(16)--meets-Crowbar-meets-Rollins-Band sound practically levelling the whole tent. "The Bloodstock show was intense!" Jim agrees. "But we try to make every show the same, whether we're playing to 60 or 600 we play like it could be our last show." With a new album in the works, let's hope their last show is a way off yet! [KW]

[www.Facebook.com/MastiffHCHC](http://www.Facebook.com/MastiffHCHC)



## NOTHING CLEAN

The next time some hoary old hardcore 'veteran' starts lecturing you on how 'povviolence is dead', chuck them a copy of Nothing Clean's new split with La Letra Pequeña and tell them to fuck off. Spawned from Leicester's fertile hardcore scene, their members have previously done time in bands like Mangle, Meatpacker, Diet Pills, Toecutter, Disability and Chief Wiggum, though this is arguably their fastest project to date. "Leicester's a weird place," says guitarist James Stringer. "For the size of the city the scene's pretty small but the people who do it have always done it. I think because it's not very popular there's a kind of integrity and intensity to Leicester bands. We'd all be doing it even if there was nobody to watch. Andy from Mangle once said to me 'I don't do bands because I want to be cool or hang out or meet people or whatever. I do it because I fucking hate everything.' I think that pretty much sums it up." [KW]

[www.Facebook.com/NothingClean](http://www.Facebook.com/NothingClean)



## BLACK SKIES BURN

We've all been there – scavenging a night on the lash by smashing together the remnants of a bottle of Vodkat, cheap cider and grinder scrapings before being catapulted into a feral intoxication. Such chaos accurately portrays Black Skies Burn's shitmix of death/grind/thrash dissonance, and according to guitarist Chris Marks, also reflects the band's approach to constructing their music. "We generally tend to play whatever we're feeling at the time and try picture if it's something that we'd headbang or gurn along to ourselves!" Chris reveals. "[For the next release] we decided to go for a split; 'To Grind And Pound' is due out next month on Grindscene Records and features our friends in Holocausto Canibal, Basement Torture Killings, Gout, Judas Cradle, Nagasaki Birth Defect, Shitfuckingshit and Kadaverficker." Don't expect it to sound like a hangover cure. [RT]

[www.Facebook.com/BlackSkiesBurn](http://www.Facebook.com/BlackSkiesBurn)



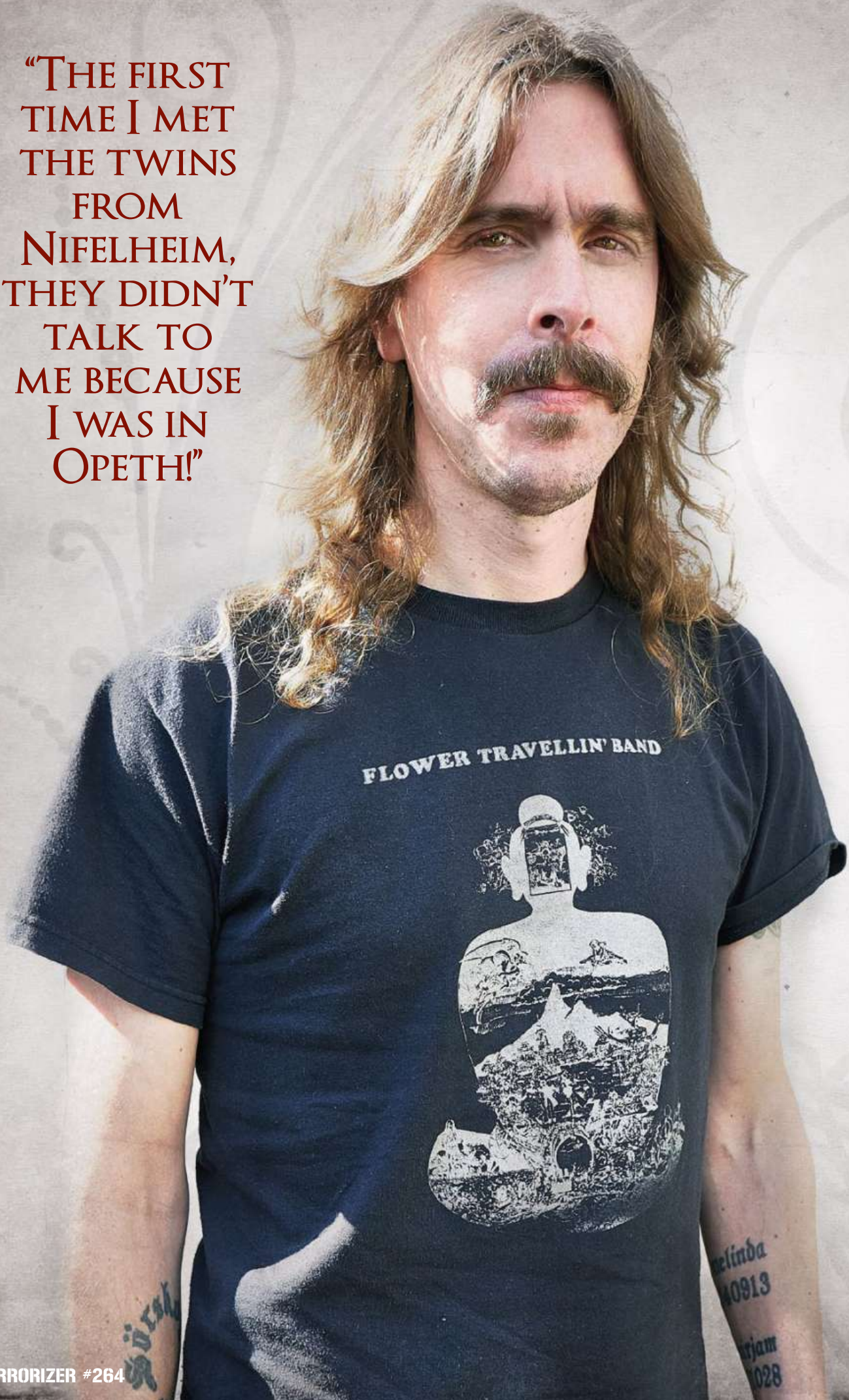
## DECREPID

One could assume being based in London would translate to numerous opportunities but as Decrepid (and former Necrosadistic Goat Torture) guitarist Danny Price reveals, "competition is fierce and with so many options out there, even the very good acts struggle to climb their way up. We simply enjoy raw brutality and we don't see technicality as a priority. Me and the other guitarist were playing black/thrash prior but collectively, we've all been involved in different styles within the scene. In the end, Decrepid has always been what we want to hear from a death metal band." [OZB]

[www.Decrepid.Blogspot.co.uk](http://www.Decrepid.Blogspot.co.uk)



“THE FIRST  
TIME I MET  
THE TWINS  
FROM  
NIFELHEIM,  
THEY DIDN’T  
TALK TO  
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I WAS IN  
OPETH!”





# “NO ONE WAS LISTENING TO MY MUSIC AND I DIDN'T HAVE A FUTURE BUT I HAD FRIENDS”

THERE WAS A TIME, REMEMBERS MIKAEL ÅKERFELDT, WHEN THE LOVE FOR HIS MUSIC WASN'T IN ABUNDANCE. 25 YEARS AND ELEVEN ALBUMS LATER, TIMES HAVE CERTAINLY CHANGED. WITH THIS MONTH SEEING OPETH PLAY ANNIVERSARY SHOWS AND THE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASE OF TWO CLASSIC ALBUMS, WHAT BETTER TIME TO CHAT TO THE FRONTMAN ABOUT LIFE IN ONE OF SWEDEN'S FINEST EXPORTS?

Words: Lee MacBride Photos: Marie Korner

## **Congratulations on your 25th Anniversary – how does it feel?**

“It's a bit of a ‘fuck me’ thing! I don't think we would have made it. It's crazy as it doesn't feel like that at all. I am just going with the flow. We only look to the next tour and the next record.”

“It's hard to relate to being in a band for that length of time. I am 41 now and sixteen when we started so that's over half my life. The band has become me and I have become the band! It defines me as a person. I am still that guy even in my private life. If I go to pick up my kids at school the teachers and the parents ask me how the band is going! My daughter Melinda is turning eleven this year. I was writing for ‘Ghost Reveries’ when my then wife was pregnant with her. Time flies! When people say that in films it genuinely does.”



## **Do you group certain eras of the band together in your head? For instance you had the years on Candlelight, Peaceville, Music For Nations and Roadrunner or in different phases?**

“Definitely different phases. I was just taking about that with my dinner guests. You measure your life in albums. Rather than mention the year we would say it was around the time of the ‘Blackwater Park’ record. Your whole life is defined by the record you were creating. After 25 years I do feel a bit detached from how I was, what the band was doing and the line-up changes we went through. When I think back to the first line-up with Anders [Nordin, drums], Peter [Lindgren, guitar/bass] and Johan [De Farfalla, bass] it's like it never happened. I would have forgotten it unless there was proof! Some of these events are so far in the past. I have been living for the day for a long time. I only live in the past when it comes to being a consumer of music, because I prefer to listen to old music, but for me once there is a new day I have forgotten about the past.”

**Is it a bit like the theory of mindfulness, where you live completely in the moment unaffected but the past or the future? ▶**





# "I THINK PEOPLE WILL LISTEN TO 'BLACKWATER PARK' AND GET THE SAME FEELING I DID FROM KING CRIMSON RECORDS"

"I think I am a bit like that. I am very nostalgic and have a lot of memories but there are very few moments in my own career that I reminisce over. There are so many moments in my childhood, friends and places and the dynamics in my family when I was a kid are very dear to me but I forget most of the things to do with the band."

## What would you say is your fondest era of the band?

"The first record of course [1995's 'Orchid']. I was only nineteen then and to record a record for a label and be in the studio after years of rehearsing, dreaming and working was incredible. I have very fond memories of that recording."

Greatness is a strange thing. It was a great time but it's not like I would want to go back. It's just a nice memory. It made up for the hard times when we had no money and no place to live. The fourth album 'Still Life' was special too. I still didn't have a penny to my name and was living off conserved meat. I remember I was buying canned meat which cost less than a pound which I lived off every day for a long time. I had fuck all money but it was a happy time and I had my own place [to live]. Jonas [Renkse] from Katatonia and I were hanging out back then. We always had money to go drinking Friday and Saturday night. We would be like vultures hanging around the bars stealing people's beers that they left behind! We would watch and see who wasn't going to finish their drink and just swipe it. It was like I wasn't part of society in a way. No one wanted to be anywhere near or expected anything of me. No one was listening to my music and I didn't have a future but I had friends. Johan and I were in the same situation but we were very happy."

## Since those innocent days, has the band affected you in more negative ways?

"I wouldn't say negative. Many things are much better. We can put out records that people are anticipating and we can go out on tour. It's a good feeling knowing people are following what we are doing. Even negative criticism would have been great back then because someone would have cared! Now there are a lot of people monitoring what we do. If I miss something connected with nostalgia it is the innocence of being in a band. I am trying to keep that enjoyment of being in the band. I try and keep the creative process identical to what it was when we started. We never use

producers who tell us what to do or allow the record label or management to advise us, we just do what we always have. I have two kids now and there is a puzzle to get things sorted. I can't just do exactly what I want. I used to





have all the time to just focus on the band full-time and I don't want to do that anymore. It's much more difficult and a strain to do things but I can't complain as being in a band has been all I have wanted to do since I was a child. I am in a very fortunate position."

**How do you manage your career in the band and keep a balance between your work and home life?**

"It happens naturally for me. I like to think of my life as two extremes. When I am away doing the band it has my full attention but when I come back home I put all my attention on the children. I am divorced now so my life is much more complicated than it was when I was married. I have to schedule tours more carefully. When I get off stage I go straight back to being a dad. I don't mix the two. When I have my children I don't work, text or answer emails. The whole day is scheduled around them. I can be an attention whore every now and then but having kids was very good for me. The whole rock 'n' roll attention thing isn't real. Even if you feel on top of the world one day that isn't necessarily the case. The next day nobody gives a fuck about what you're doing. I don't have any aspect of my life I am unhappy about."

**'Still Life' felt like the most conceptual of your works in terms of the story. Was that the case?**

"Well the album we did before that [1998's 'My Arms, Your Hearse'] was a bit of a concept album. I was into King Diamond and the Pink Floyd concepts and I wanted to do something like that. 'Still Life' probably feels like that because we had a central character in each of those songs. It was a bit more advanced with 'Still Life', I wanted the listeners to have that King Diamond feel and have a story to follow."

**I remember reading the lyrics and getting a sense of the character needing to belong.**

"In a way. It was loosely based on an atheist who is banished from his city as he does not share their beliefs and leaves his love Melinda. The album begins with his returning to the city to search for his love. It goes downhill for the two main characters. 'White Cluster', the last song on there is about when they are executed. The council of the town pass judgement on them and they are sentenced to death by hanging. Everything I wrote on that album has a purpose."

**'Blackwater Park' was the turning point for your career though.**

"Yeah, that was when things really happened for us but I

dispute the statement that it's better than our other records. It was just heard by more people. Steven Wilson did a great job on production and mixing of the album. We signed to Music For Nations at the time and we got a better distribution deal in Europe and the U.S. We were signed to a label that mainly put out hip hop and WWF wrestling compilation albums which was weird!

The album is a good record.

At the time there wasn't anyone doing what we did. It was unique but I didn't think it was that much better than our other stuff. I loved 'Harvest' and the title track. There were a lot of things on the record that I wasn't happy with. Half of 'The Funeral Portrait' feels very rushed to me but the quality is for the listener to judge. When you're involved with the record it lives with you for a time but they have a best before date. I listen to them for a couple of months and enjoy it and then I don't listen to it anymore. The people

who listen to our music have the same relationship with our records that I do with my favourites. I think people into Opeth will listen to 'Blackwater Park' and get the feeling I did from King Crimson records.

"The measure of longevity of the record is if it makes you feel the same way you did when you first heard it. It's such a personal thing. You connect with music from certain eras in your life. I am proud of the record but I think it came out at the right time which helped!" ►





# "I HAVE BEEN LIVING FOR THE DAY FOR A LONG TIME"

It came out at the end of the noughties when the nu-metal era was dying. Opeth bridged the gap for music fans who were looking for more extreme stuff and people who were not into death metal beforehand. It had so much technicality and things going for it. The follow-up albums 'Deliverance' and 'Damnation' almost seemed overlooked, despite now being heralded as greatness.

"Yeah it might have been. I always think 'Damnation' was overlooked. I expected more of a negative reaction from people towards it but it fell through the cracks. On the other hand that was the time the band took off. We were doing huge world tours. Those years are probably the most blurred ones for me because of that!"

**I remember seeing you playing UK shows with Arch Enemy on that tour.**

"The only memory I have of that tour was when a car broke down in front of the tour bus when we were on our way to a show. I remember hanging out with Angela [Gossow] because I'd met her when she got together with Mike Amott. We went out to a dance bar and I remember thinking Angela was really cool and awesome. She was much more quiet and subdued when she was on tour!"

**How do you feel about Peter Lindgren leaving during the 'Ghost Reveries' era? Do you stay in touch?**

"Yes, I speak to him on the phone a lot and we went for dinner and a lot of drinks! He has a very different life now and the reason he is not in the band is that he wanted to concentrate on his education. He has a PHD in physics and one in literature and wanted to have a job connected to that. At the time, my reaction was 'You have a fucking job! You're the guy that loves Saxon and Iron Maiden and has always wanted to do this. Why are you giving up?! You talked about the band your whole life!' I don't think he regrets it. There are a lot of stories about Peter that have never been talked about and I want to keep it that way. He is a great guy and he will eternally be part of Opeth. It was his choice to leave."

**What about Martin Lopez (drums) leaving?**

"The day after Martin left we went for a beer and that's the last time I saw him. I haven't talked to him and don't have anything negative to say about him as a person. It was a pleasure working with him but at the end it didn't work anymore. I hear he is happy in Soen. I have no great desire to talk to him. We were never buddies, we were just in the band together. We didn't hang out really. I always thought he was a great guy and musician. We had a great few years but some that were not so great."

**Now you are making prog rock albums with**

**no growling vocals. It has alienated a lot of your fans who may have not understood where Opeth's origins come from. How satisfying has it been to get away from metal?**

"I don't know if they understood or not. To be honest I don't really care. Maybe they just didn't like the songs we came up with. I never saw it as us giving the fans the middle finger. Maybe I was naïve that a record like 'Heritage' would be accepted by the more conservative fans but I was surprised that some people hated it and hated us with a passion. People were pointing fingers at us saying it was a mistake and we should repent! I am equally emotional when it comes to music but I would never point my finger at a band because they didn't do what I wanted. I think it is very narcissistic, even more so than what this band is doing. Maybe we are not following the tracks we have done for years. That backlash was blown out of proportion. Other than comments on social media, nothing really happened. We didn't become much bigger or smaller. The only negativity we got was that we lost some fans but we gained some too so it evened out. I love that album."

**At first it felt like a novelty album but as you listen more you can hear the intricacies. Have you started writing the new album?**

"I see all our records as one offs. Some are more extreme but 'Heritage' is more self-indulgent, but we didn't want to be preaching to the converted. I think it's a difficult album to get into but oddly it connected with people who wouldn't talk to me back in the day. Like black metal people. I remember when the first time I met the twins from Nifelheim, they didn't talk to me because I was in Opeth! That was not necro enough [laughs]. I got to know those guys and we hang out and they love 'Heritage' – it's the only one they like! 'Pale Communion' is a continuation of that. It's perhaps a bit more streamlined in terms of production. Now I don't really know what's next. I hate having a plan, I want it to be as spontaneous as possible. We have a few riffs for the

next album and some arrangements. I was quite nervous when I started but I start writing and go into my bubble for six or seven hours. I have to decide if it's good or shit. It's all a process. You have to write a lot of shit music because you get to the nuggets of gold in there. You have to forget about how people will perceive your work and just concentrate on conveying what you want to communicate in music. I think if you are creative and you have an authority figure, like an editor telling you what you do is good or shit it can influence what you write but with me the authority I answer to is the fans who get the records – only by then the album has been created and it's already too late!"





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KYLESA

**AS SAVANNAH'S *KYLESA* RELEASE THEIR SEVENTH ALBUM 'EXHAUSTING FIRE', TERRORIZER FINDS FOUNDERS LAURA PLEASANTS AND PHILLIP COPE IN CONTEMPLATIVE BUT FOCUSED MOODS... BUSINESS AS USUAL THEN!**  
**Words: José Carlos Santos**

**B**eing the Kylesa fan that you surely are if you have a decent percentage of good taste, you surely remember the bleak circumstances in which the Savannah band's last album, 'Ultraviolet', was created. Though a fantastic record by any standard, it was also due to a series of unfortunate life events befalling the main band members, a strained and tense experience to go through. While new offering 'Exhausting Fire' isn't exactly a breeze in the park, featuring all the fire and raw energy the group has always delivered in


their records, you can all but hear the (now) three-piece exhaling a collective sigh of relief and relaxing within the comfort of a style that is all but their own by now.

"I agree, but I'm not really sure why that is," guitarist/vocalist Laura Pleasants ponders slowly, when we put it to her that the new songs sound very relaxed and make us think that the band had a cracking time while recording them. "I guess going in, maybe the way we recorded it was a little more focused, because it was just myself, Phillip and Carl

really doing everything, we were really on the same page, closely working together. I demoed all my stuff out... but I don't know. In the writing process too, and I'm just speaking for myself here, but I felt that it was easier to write. It was more comfortable, that I knew better what I wanted to do and how I wanted to approach it."

Phillip Cope, the other guitarist/vocalist half of Kylesa's core songwriting team, denies that 'Exhausting Fire' was any easier to make than any other record, and his recollections are more of a climatic nature. "I would never use the word 'effortless' to describe a record," he says with a laugh. "Every record takes a lot of work. But I think we had a good focus on this; that helped a lot. What I mostly remember from writing it is a really hot Summer! Most of my parts were written during the Summer, and it was so hot over here. Besides that, I just get this feeling of trying to get my life





**“EVERY RECORD  
TAKES A LOT OF  
WORK, BUT I THINK  
WE HAD A GOOD  
FOCUS ON THIS”**

# INTERVIEW

back on track after being gone so long and having problems at home and whatnot, just being in town, trying to find a place to live, dealing with things that you don't have to deal with when you're on tour. When I hear the songs I just think of this long, hot, miserable Summer. Even if we recorded it in the Winter, it didn't help," he chuckles.

**O**f course, contrary to other occasions in the past, we almost have the entire Kylesa line-up with us for this conversation, only missing drummer Carl McGinley. When such good vibes about the new album are attributed to "focus", it's inevitable to link that to the recent trimming down of the line-up to this core trio, and both Phil and Laura agree to that as well.

"It's definitely easier this way," Phil admits. "Laura and I have been the major songwriters since day one, and Carl has been writing with us for ten-plus years now. When you're a five-person band,

you tour all the time, people are going to come and go and that's what's been happening with the other members. We haven't had a 'okay, you're in the band' sort of situation for a while, people just do it while they can do it. Whenever it would come the time for an album, we tried to be fair to whoever was in the band for a while and let them have their say, but at one point someone told us that the three of us have such a great chemistry that it isn't easy for someone to just arrive and get in there. I really thought hard about that and I decided to stop trying to force people on records. People that aren't fully prepared or that don't fully understand our chemistry. And that's helping us a lot to work with ourselves and focus on our own strengths without trying to change the dynamics of the band all the time."

Laura adds that "it does cut through the bullshit," revealing that "we did think about getting other people involved in the record, we had a short

list of names that we thought about calling, and then we were ultimately like, we could do that, but we don't know what the results are going to be. It's like hiring a studio musician, which can end up being great or a disaster. Especially with our band, energy and vibe is so important to what we do, that we thought it'd be best to just do it ourselves. And it made me think more about, when composing songs, in things that I didn't think that much before. I often found myself specifically thinking, 'okay, what do I do for the bass here?'" Without a bass player, Laura ended up sharing bass duties with the band's usual engineer. "They ended up being split between me and Jay Matheson, who's the owner of the Jam Room where we record. He's worked on every record we've ever done, he's a great, old-school bass player, he plays with his fingers, he grew up listening to Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath, he's in his 50s... he just gets it. Getting him involved was a no-brainer. But when ►





## “WRITING THIS RECORD, I DID HAVE TO GET TO A PLACE IN MY HEAD AND THINK ABOUT IT – OKAY, SO THIS IS ANOTHER KYLESA RECORD. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?”

writing these bass lines, it made me think about the song as a whole, where every part needs to be, instead of just a bunch of guitar parts and then assuming everything will come together.”

**T**he conversation then turns to a little nerding out about Black Sabbath and Iron Maiden themselves and to what extent “old-school” is a state of mind or something that comes with age. It’s a bit of both, it turns out, and while on that subject, age is something that’s starting to matter for Kylesa. There are a few moments of “where did the time go?” these days.

“I’ve been getting it real bad lately,” Phil says, still smiling about it nevertheless. “All of a sudden it hits you. I’ve never really thought about it because I’m always moving forward, thinking about time or getting old has never been a huge issue to me. But out of nowhere, just recently, it’s really been like, ‘wow! Where does time go, where did the last five years go, everything seems like it’s just happened the other day. I’m in my 40s now, this is crazy! How did that even happen?’. And for me it’s even longer, as we started Kylesa straight out of Damad and I did two albums with Damad over seven years. So I’ve been going at it for over twenty years!”


“It is hard to believe this is our seventh album,” Laura says in the same state of near disbelief. “We started this band when I was in college and it’s been almost fifteen years, I guess it will be come Winter time. We started the band in the Winter of 2000, so come January I guess we will have hit that mark already. It’s crazy.”

Fortunately, the effects of these realisations on the music are nothing but positive.

“Writing this record, I did have to get to a place in my head and think about it – okay, so this is another Kylesa record. What does that mean?” Laura reflects. “Does that mean we’re going to hash out some stuff, that we’re going to half-ass it? Or does it mean we’re going to really think about these songs, that I still have it in me... I really had to ask myself all these questions. And I’m really happy with my contributions to the record, with the songs that I wrote and co-wrote.”

“It’s not harder for me to write songs,” Phil offers. “It’s something I’ve always done, so it’s natural, I don’t even think about it. An idea comes and I do it. We do have to self-edit a bit, and we do it more now, because we don’t want to repeat ourselves, we don’t want to write riffs or lyrics that might sound similar to something we’ve done in

the past. After writing hundreds of songs sometimes you run out of words to say things. You have to think a little harder about what you’re saying and how you’re saying it. We have to be more careful, I would say, but I’ve always written and there has never been this period where I’ve stopped, I never had writer’s block or anything. It doesn’t come easy, but I’m well-practised.”

Practise makes perfect, they say. ‘Exhausting Fire’ is yet another good example. 

**‘Exhausting Fire’ is out now on Season Of Mist**  
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# DEATH COMES CRUSHING!

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*Words: Kevin Stewart-Panko*

So, how did this tour come to be? Was its genesis based around bringing the Carcass/Napalm Australian/New Zealand tour last spring, also called 'Deathcrusher,' to this side of the planet?

Jeff Walker: "Well, not really. It more started with us touring with Obituary in the States last year. We did what we refer to as 'C' markets [laughs]. I thought it would have been a good idea to go off the beaten path and play towns that normally get neglected or overlooked; places where bands don't often go so there might be a hungry fan base. We asked Obituary to come out with us and we had a good time and they're a really great live act. It was a combination of that and going to Australia with Napalm. What kind of happened there was that the promoter wanted to call the tour something and we didn't want it to be called that, so we just changed it to 'Deathcrusher' rather than have it called 'the-combination-of-the-new-album-titles' tour. We had a good time with them and wanted to do a full tour of Europe and big one of England and the UK because we haven't since 'Surgical Steel' came out. So we thought, 'Yeah, Obituary.' And seeing as we had just toured with Napalm, we thought, 'Why not them too?' Napalm had just been out with Voivod in the States and it was just a case of sticking things together. To be honest, it's a little bit of safety in numbers

because times are hard nowadays, though we'd still rather try and fill a 1000 capacity venue than just play to 4-500 people on our own. So, if this fails, we can blame it on all the other bands [laughs]."

We can't imagine the reactions to the announcement of the tour being anything but welcoming, but we can also imagine curmudgeonly types getting all in a huff about the name of the tour referencing the old 'Grindcrusher' comp and tour. Please tell us we've grossly overestimated the capacity for metal fans' negativity and whining.

Jeff: "I haven't really seen much of a reaction other than some comments suggesting that Carcass gets replaced with another band [laughs]. The vibe I'm getting in the UK is that it's stoked people's imaginations. Obituary hasn't toured the UK for a long time either and definitely still have a big fan base, so people are definitely psyched. I know a lot of Voivod fans are happy because they haven't toured here in a while either. The problem with the UK is that a lot of tours only ever play London. No one does proper tours of the UK anymore but we want to target our home audience. To be honest, we'd do more dates if we could. We're doing seven or eight. We could probably do 20 in smaller places. Maybe that's something we'll explore in the future because our last UK tour was fifteen or so shows and, personally, I'm getting bored of playing festivals and it's not like we're getting support slot offers."

Shane Embury: "It was going to be the original name of the comp and it got changed at the last minute for various reasons. It's more a case of being nostalgic. We haven't faced any negativity as far as I've seen and even if some ▶



CARCASS Pic: Ester Segarra

**"WHEN YOU'RE TWENTY YEARS OLD, THEY COULD STICK YOU IN ANYTHING OR PUT WHEELS ON A SHOEBOX AND WE WOULDN'T CARE"**



# "THERE WERE DEFINITELY A LOT MORE EGOS THEN. I THINK THAT CAME WITH BEING

people thought the name was cheating or something, I could care less, really. I kind of find it apt and it has its reasons for both myself and Jeff."

Michel "Away" Langevin: "Jeff asked me to do the art for the promo and tour posters and when I asked him what he wanted, he said, 'I want death getting killed' [laughs]. When people ask me to do something, they usually want me to do it with the crust/metal feel to it and if I do something else, they're not happy. The reaction has been amazing. I haven't seen anything negative except that people wish that the tour wasn't just a European tour. I couldn't care about that and I don't think most people do. When we did the tour with Napalm Death, the shows were packed and kids and old-timers were just happy to see the bands and it was a big party."

**You all have some amount of history with one another and extensive touring histories. How would you say touring, either with each other, or in general, was back then compared to now?**

Jeff: "There definitely is more money involved and arguably, the audiences have gotten bigger. I think what's changed as far as the bands are concerned is that everyone's more chilled out now, more realistic and hopefully a bit more humble. There were definitely a lot more egos involved 20-25 years ago, but I think that came with being young and hot-headed. The reality is that there was a time when Obituary was bigger than Napalm, then vice versa and Voivod was on a major label and bigger than everyone. At the moment, this is a Carcass headliner because we've come out of hibernation, there's a flow of interest and the album has sold very strongly. I think that shows how people have chilled out because at some time, any band on this tour has been as big, or bigger, than the



others, except for Carcass [laughs]."

Shane: "I really don't drink at all anymore, so the partying is a lot less than it was years ago. When Napalm Death toured with Obituary in '92 and '94, there was a lot of drinking and partying and fun. I mean, the fun is still there, for sure, but we're a bit older so me and [Obituary guitarist] Trevor [Peres] might sit there after a show and talk about the BBQ-ing he likes to do back in Florida as opposed to drinking a shitload. That's the only real difference, except that the live shows are better. I saw Obituary a couple weeks ago and it was the best I'd seen them in a long, long time. They went through the old classics,

had lots of energy on stage and sounded amazing.

Donald Tardy: "When you're twenty years old, they could stick you in anything or put wheels on a shoebox and we wouldn't care. We wouldn't talk about the fees and how much money we'd be making. Nowadays, you're talking about band members with families and children. I think Obituary has eleven or twelve kids and grandkids between band members, so it's a whole different ball game. Now, social networking and technology makes keeping in touch with family easy. The amenities, venues and travel arrangements are so much better and the promoters are so much more professional now. With Obituary, the line-up is more solid than ever, we're great friends and it's a special thing to see the band live now."

**Thinking back to the tours you've done with each other over the years, are there any particular memories that stand out?**

Jeff: "The best tour we ever did was our first US tour with Death because it

OBITUARY Pic: Ester Segarra





# GOS INVOLVED 20-25 YEARS AGO, BUT I G YOUNG AND HOT-HEADED"

was a fantastic vacation. We'd never been to the States, never thought we'd be going back and every day was an adventure."

**Shane:** "I remember when we toured with Obituary in '94, I ended up doing lights for them for quite a few nights. I knew all the songs, so I got behind the desk and it was fun being able to work for them. There are so many fond memories; I wouldn't know where to start. There's just been a lot of good times. I know the Carcass guys are even crazier now than they were back in the day. [Carcass guitarist] Bill [Steer] wasn't much of a drinker back then, but he likes a couple now. But mostly it's just a lot of conversations about classic heavy metal after the show."

**Donald:** "Yeah, that's a tough one [laughs]. We did something way back in the day with Napalm where we shared a bus and [vocalist] Barney [Greenway] and I became good friends. I can't exactly remember when it was or what the tour was called, but what I do remember was thinking it'd be cool to do something like that again and it's taken us this long to actually do it. For me, things keep getting better and better as we get older and probably one of the sickest tours we've done was when Carcass invited us to do that US run with them. Their album had just come out, ours came out the day of the first show, Carcass was on fire and the venues were absolutely slammed packed! That was the first time in 20+ years we didn't headline in the US, so being a drummer I have to behave and to be able to be onstage at nine at night... I tell you I can get used to that!"

**Away:** "We actually don't have much of a touring history with the others. We did share some stages at festivals in the '90s, but we never did full-on tours with any of them back in the day. Of course, when they would come to Montreal, I'd make sure to go see them."

**A good chunk of the 'Deathcrusher' tour is hitting former Eastern Bloc countries. All of you toured over there around the time the Iron Curtain was coming down and have been back since. What sorts of differences have you noticed?**

**Jeff:** "Not much, really. We first got over there on tour with a band from Germany called Atrocity and were literally touring as the wall fell. We played places like Czech Republic and Hungary where there were still vestiges of the old power regime. I remember when we travelled through East Germany, the guards still had to be bribed with bottles of Coca-Cola and tour posters, and that's not an exaggeration. It's all free market now, but they're still eastern in their own way. As far as the crowds are concerned, they're always intense and extreme and extremely passionate and that hasn't changed."

**Shane:** "We originally went to Russia just as the Iron Curtain was coming down and we played in Prague with Obituary, I think, and some of the neighbouring countries. What I noticed is that there are more places to play the more the countries have opened. Twenty years ago, the shows were huge because they were just getting up to speed and Western bands hadn't been able to get into those countries to begin with. You can play further afield now and the shows are still a good size and the crowds are just as enthusiastic, but they are smaller than they were twenty years ago. The atmosphere back then wasn't necessarily more dangerous, but more exciting in some way. We knew that some of the people were probably

breaking the laws and crossing borders illegally to come see us because it might be their only chance to see an extreme band. The passion is still there and you can still see in their eyes. They really appreciate you playing because a lot of bands still don't go to these areas. Napalm Death has always been about being on the fringe and for us, it's a continuing journey."

**Away:** "We recorded 'Killing Technology' and 'Dimension Hatröss' in Berlin when the Berlin Wall was still up but never got behind the Iron Curtain. We tried many times to go across the wall and they always said we looked too funny [laughs]. We did play shows when the wall came down and it was amazing when we were finally able to go to Poland, Czech Republic, Eastern Germany and so on. It was quite an eye-opening experience. The PAs weren't that great and the people seemed poor, but it's hard to judge. Today, it's just like playing anywhere; the equipment is amazing and the catering is great. The progress has been pretty quick. It's always great when new countries are opening up to metal and you can travel further away. Nowadays, we do a lot of festivals with bands like Testament, Exodus and Megadeth and they all tell me about stories about going to China and India, so that's a goal for me."

**So, this tour is destined to be an all-around awesome time. What do you see as the good things about it?**

**Jeff:** "One thing that's good about this line-up is that all of the bands are really good, but no one infringes on what we're doing and we don't infringe on what the other bands are doing. The line-up is pretty diverse and pretty old-school, of course. We're also fans of these bands and it's always fun to tour with bands whose music you actually like. It makes it a bit more bearable."

**Shane:** "We've all known each other for over 25 years so there's also that aspect to it. It's going to be pretty easy going and a lot of fun."

**Away:** "Also, there are punk and metal roots we share and it attracts a great crowd. Many people know the name Voivod, but not that many people know the music, so it will be a chance to show off what we can do. We might be part of thrash metal history, but we're still pretty underground, so it'll be good for us to play bigger clubs because we can't fill these places on our own."

**Donald:** "I get excited knowing what the fans are getting ready to see when they buy a ticket, because this is a solid line-up for any metal fan. I think it's going to be special because it's going to the heart of a lot of places that don't get to see big death metal tours." 🤘

**The 'Deathcrusher' will be calling at the following UK dates:**

**23.10. Wolverhampton - Wulfrun Hall**  
**24.10. Glasgow - Barrowlands**  
**25.10. Belfast - Limelight 1**  
**26.10. Dublin - Olympia**  
**27.10. Bristol - Motion**  
**28.10. Newcastle - Northumbria Uni**  
**29.10. London - Forum**  
**30.10. Manchester - Ritz**

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[www.Voivod.net](http://www.Voivod.net)



SHANE EMBURY Pic: Marie Korner



# WELCOME

MICHIGAN'S **THE BLACK DAHLIA MURDER** ARE BACK WITH THE DARK AND BRUTAL 'ABYSMAL' AND AS FRONTMAN TREVOR STRNAD TELLS **TERRORIZER**, IT'S ONE HELL OF A RIDE

Words: James Weaver Pics: Jonathon Pushnik

**T**he upward trajectory of interest and expectations levelled at The Black Dahlia Murder has been steadily growing since the band's formation at the turn of the naughties. If 2011's 'Ritual' turned heads in the death metal scene, its follow-up in 2013 'Everblack' saw heads turn Exorcist-style, truly cementing the Michigan crew as modern day metal kings. No pressure then with seventh album 'Abysmal'.

"There's really been increased nerves since trying to follow up 'Ritual', that was a big turning point for us," confirms frontman Trevor Strnad. "The people really liked that record so we felt the pressure with 'Everblack', but then we had success with 'Everblack' so the pressure really is mounting and mounting! But it is awesome to have fans waiting in the wings of what you are doing, it's pressure but a good pressure too and I think this album is a definite response to that."

The great thing about 'Abysmal' is that while there are obvious developments in the overall sound, The Black Dahlia Murder never stray too far from their winning formula; a formula that demonstrates intricacy with brutality. For Trevor, he believes that 'Abysmal' is the product of tweaking and will stand up to the huge expectations.

"'Abysmal' was approached very seriously, we wanted to have a record that had more of an emotive quality than anything we have done before, something that would draw the listeners in and take them on a ride and hopefully make them feel something. I think we approach it like we always do, we try to make the best record we can and I think we have had the formula down for a while but now it is just small tweaks to the songwriting, dynamics and slight details. So really, we are just becoming wiser and more aware."

The major difference between 'Abysmal' and its predecessor, however, has been in the actual studio and recording process. Trevor goes on to explain that this time they avoided modern day Pro-Tools production in order to craft an album that replicates

the chaos of a live environment.

"I think there is a certain energy in this album that was lacking in the other recordings, I think it was our approach we took this time that helped things," he says. "It helped us buck the over use of Pro-Tools trend that extreme metal has taken on in the last few years. I understand that it is easier to replace the drums than actually spending the time to get good drum sounds."

He continues: "Recording extreme drums that are that fast is definitely a more complicated ball game. A bazillion good records were made before quantising the shit out of everything and they all had individual personality, I think that is what is missing now. A lot of records have the same drum kit sounds, the same kick and snare, everything sounds like a shotgun; everything is perfectly moved to be on time. There is no humanity to it anymore, a lot of samey albums have come out in the last decade or so, so for us going backwards to what it was before all of that was kind of moving forwards, making a record that we know is not perfect but it has personality, it doesn't sound like any other record."

Similar to the band's back catalogue of work, 'Abysmal' features an abundance of gory and violent

lyrics depicting scenarios of atrocity. For Trevor, his lyrical inspiration is focused through his love of death metal and a reflection of the horrors of reality. "There's horror movies and there is always influence from the news, there is so much negativity in the world news. The world is the same violent world it has always been but now there are so many news outlets with the internet, you just hear about every gruesome crime and story that is going on,

from mothers cannibalising their children and so on," he explains. "It is a wild world of macabre, there is a lot of stuff that is happening so you don't have to look far to find inspiration. And then there is death metal, I always look for death metal, especially the older stuff and I see that we are a gateway band for a lot of kids, maybe their first exposure to anything ▶

**"WE ARE  
BECOMING  
WISER  
& MORE  
AWARE"**





# E TO HELL







## "IT IS A WILD WORLD OF MACABRE, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO FIND INSPIRATION"

extreme. So I try to embody what I have always liked about death metal as a fan; for me it is sticking to those classic themes like zombie attacks, werewolves, and necrophilia.

"It is always something I have loved and even though it may be a cliché, I think it is something that is important to be a part of the equation because that was one of the things that attracted me. The fantasy of the lyrics. It is like the attraction of watching a horror movie, people are like 'why would you want to watch a horror movie? Why would you want to see people get killed?' I think it is just a thrill ride."

**W**hilst it is common for death metal to rely on the gore aspect and breakneck speed to capture the listener's attention, The Black Dahlia Murder explore these themes in their own complicated way. 'Abysmal' contains the shock-value that is expected in the grotesque world of death metal but the record contains hidden

qualities of depth and personal experience also. Trevor explains some of the varying themes that are explored throughout.

"There were a couple of songs for me that were very personal, I wrote them when I was feeling depressed, they were cathartic for me and it was definitely dark stuff I was going through, so in a way it was healthy for me to write some of those songs. The first song, 'Receipt', is a suicide anthem of sorts and the third song, 'Abysmal', is another bleak song. I enjoy the freedom of the death metal lyrics, I like to create new stories to make up characters, that can also be a very cathartic release as well. I hope people can connect to those songs when they feel like they are alone or feel terrible, maybe they can see that it happens to everybody.

"Abysmal' has a bit of everything, there are a lot of references to hell, the album cover depicts hell and the name 'Abysmal' is referring to the abyss and the horrors of the abyss. The song 'Stygiophobic' is about religious fanatics that are

so paranoid about sinning and going to hell they live a crippled existence where they barely go outside, all they do is worry about their friends and family, they have nightmares every night about the people they love burning in hell. It's about a personal hell. 'Threat Level Number Three', which is one of the faster songs on the record, that song follows a rapist or a molester that has been chemically castrated and it is about his internal dialogue. So it's him trying to re-enter society and the hell that he is going through and the hell he has put other people through. There are a lot of different little tie-ins but as per usual the lyrics are definitely very macabre driven, that's the wheel

house I like to operate in. I feel a certain pressure from the fans that do check out the lyrics to shock them, I like that challenge. To me, I was always trying to find the most shocking lyrics and that was one of the things that really appealed to me about death metal at first. The violence of Cannibal Corpse and the short story telling element of a lot of death metal bands. That's the approach I have applied, it's a three or four-minute horror story."

Beyond his responsibilities of screaming into a microphone, Trevor is, still to this day, an active follower of metal's underground. This is what fuels Trevor's passion and his love for making music.

"I feel that I have a responsibility to represent death metal on how I see it. I just want to turn a young person onto it and I want them to see all the things that I have been excited about for all this time. I realised the other day that I have been listening to death metal for twenty years now, it started in 1995 with Suffocation's 'Pierced From Within', but I was too young to realise that there were shows going on right under my nose. Getting that awareness of the underground has been one of the most fruitful aspects of my life, I still enjoy checking out new bands almost every day and what the internet has brought to the fold for me as a fan, for someone who is constantly seeking knowledge about metal and new bands, has been great and I am still attracted to all the same stuff. You could say it is cliché to write a song about zombie attacks but I feel there is always room for the classics."

So do we, Trevor, so do we. 🍷

'Abysmal' is out now on Metal Blade  
[www.Facebook.com/TheBlackDahliaMurderOfficial](http://www.Facebook.com/TheBlackDahliaMurderOfficial)





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# NO COMPRA

**“WE WANTED ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY**

**TWO OF THE UK'S OLD GUARD THRASH BANDS ACID REIGN AND XENTRIX ARE BACK TO SHOW TODAY'S WHIPPERSNAPPERS WHAT'S UP. TERRORIZER SPEAKS TO BOTH BANDS TO REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS AND CELEBRATE THE FUTURE**

Words: Ross Baker





# PROMISE

## TO GO OUT WITH A BANG!"

**W**hen Xentrix announced their reformation in 2013, perhaps the headlines weren't exactly splattered across the rock press, but a number of high profile metal fest appearances around Europe reignited some love for the Preston thrashers, and the quartet clearly showed to old and new fans alike that there was plenty of fire in the collective belly. And with new recordings hopefully on the way, it's time to get excited again.

"If Xentrix doesn't have a goal, I'm not interested in playing for the sake of it," says frontman Chris Astley. "We felt we have unfinished business. To be a bunch of blokes playing gigs at nearly fifty is unbelievable. We wanted one more opportunity to go out with a bang!"

Initially signed in 1988 by Mark Palmer (current managing director at Nuclear Blast UK), Xentrix hit the road extensively, touring with the likes of fellow countrymen Sabbath, Onslaught and US giants Testament. While the band's 1999 debut 'Shattered Existence' remains their *pièce de résistance* – even now original CD copies exchange for vast amounts on Ebay – it was the band's 1990 cover of Ray Parker Jr's 'Ghostbusters' theme that perhaps cemented them into metal's history books. A blessing and a curse that Chris recognises.

"There was a good thrash scene but I never cared about other bands and what they were doing," he says. "All I cared about was having a career in music. The UK scene had a few good bands but some were a joke. It was never as strong as the German or American scenes.

"[That song's] been a millstone since the day we did it. When we reformed, I said to everyone, 'we have to play the songs that people want to hear because we're currently a cabaret act,' but we've turned a page now and won't be doing it again."

By the time Xentrix released their third album 'Kin' in 1992, the face of heavy metal was changing and, for the quartet themselves, their primal thrash

had been swapped for a more mature sound – not to mention a controversial drum sound comparable to 'St. Anger'.

"A review said it sounded like hitting a sink with a hammer," laughs Chris. "It was a difficult time. Rock clubs were closing; everyone was listening to death metal or grunge. At the time we needed to make money but all our avenues were closing and rock was dying. 'Kin' has some of our best songs on it but I don't listen to it because it's not reflective of Xentrix. When we came out of the studio we wondered if we'd made a mistake but if we'd done another British thrash album we wouldn't have survived."

The release also saw the slow demise of the band; a split with Roadrunner and frustration over a changing scene, meant eventually the band hung up their instruments.

Skip to the present and Xentrix are very much a growing concern, and as we stated earlier, have a new album on the horizon too. "It's all recorded. We decided we had to do something new or all the excitement of being back together would be gone. We have a lot of aggressive, riff-driven stuff. It's a lot thrasher than you'd expect. We've played a couple of the new tracks live and they've gone down really well. There are a few harmony

vocals in there. It's classic Xentrix. We wrote a song about the terrorist group I.S. called 'There Will Be Consequences'. There's a lot to be angry about."

We can't wait!

**A** lot has been written about Acid Reign in these here pages lately, almost 30 years since their initial forming back in 1985. For a moment in heavy metal history, the self-proclaimed Kings Of Applecore lived and breathed their heavy metal and toured relentlessly across Europe, both as headliners and with luminaries such as Death Angel, Flotsam And Jetsam, Nuclear ►



## MORE BLASTS FROM THE PAST



### RE-ANIMATOR

**B**ridging the gap between socially conscious and humorous lyrics, Hull thrashers Re-Animator reformed for a few gigs after being contacted by a fan who set them up on social media to try and persuade them. "The guy basically harassed us until we gave in!" recalls bassist John Wilson. "He got us on MySpace and Facebook and we got asked to do a 25th anniversary gig of a show we did with Acid Reign called 'The Midsummer Night's Hoedown'. As soon as we got back in the rehearsal room it came flooding back. We were offered a gig in Nottingham with Xentrix and Lawnmower Deth and then Bloodstock this year. The turnout was fantastic, we couldn't believe it. Unfortunately Mike [Abel, guitar] decided he didn't want to do it anymore so we got Dan Murray involved. Dan's only 26 so he brought the average age down, if nothing else! He's brought a youthful zeal to the band that's given us all a real lift. We have a few riffs together and will be releasing new material next year. We might re-record some of the old stuff on [1990 debut] 'Condemned To Eternity' as we were never happy with the sound of it. The new stuff will be faithful to Re-Animator. It's Re-Animator evolved!"

[www.Facebook.com/Re-Animator-243820375663295](http://www.Facebook.com/Re-Animator-243820375663295)



### HYDRA VEIN

**B**righton's Hydra Vein were championed by Tommy Vance on the BBC Friday Rock Show and their albums have just been reissued on vinyl and CD – but bassist and founding member Damon Maddison has told Terrorizer, they won't be reforming. "It wasn't easy for the British thrash bands, people were more into the American and German acts," he recalls. "I was nineteen when I wrote that first album [1988's 'Rather Death Than False Of Faith']. It gave us a voice in the Thatcherite climate. It was an escape from the shit jobs we had. It was great to hear our songs on The Friday Rock Show but we never thought we'd get much success. I wish all the other reforming bands the best of luck but I can't see it happening for us. It wouldn't feel right without [vocalist] Mike Keen. It would be weird having someone else sing those songs. I'm not completely ruling out doing something with Hydra Vein but it's not very likely. I'm in Amsterdam now and the guys are scattered around the UK, plus we're all involved in different bands now. I have a project called Silvaticus. It's me, my brother Paul [Bate, ex-Hydra Vein], Jef Streatfield [ex-The Wildhearts and Sack Trick] and our friend James Manley Bird on vocals. It's not thrash, more straight up heavy metal. It's a lot of fun and generating a bit of interest."

[www.Facebook.com/HydraVein](http://www.Facebook.com/HydraVein)





## “PEOPLE THOUGHT BECAUSE WE FUCKED AROUND WITH SILLY STRING AT GIGS THAT WE WEREN’T SERIOUS MUSICIANS”

Assault, Dark Angel and Exodus. Always up for a laugh, at their height of their success an Acid Reign show was equally brutal as it was fun. Not everyone, however, got the joke.

“People thought because we fucked around with silly string at gigs that we weren’t serious musicians,” says frontman Howard H Smith. “We got so many reviews for [1989 debut] ‘The Fear’ and [1990 follow-up] ‘Obnoxious’ that said, ‘Well it’s good but you shouldn’t laugh and joke if you want a career’. What those fuckheads didn’t understand was we weren’t in this to have a career. The reason we didn’t pay attention to labels or

critics was because we were fans of thrash metal and they weren’t! You don’t play music to have a career! Fuck that!”

Splitting up after 1990’s ‘Obnoxious’ album, up until the recently released ‘The Apple Core Archives’ box set and reissues of Acid Reign’s catalogue, hard CD copies of the bands original releases were exchanging hands on the second hand market for serious dough; testament that the band’s legacy has transcended a new generation of fans.

H has always insisted he’d never reform the band... until this year’s “reboot”. While unable to recruit various past members for various reasons (and previously discussed in these here pages), H is confident of his new band. “The guys I’m working with now have Acid Reign in their DNA,” he laughs.

And Acid Reign 2015 will release ‘Plan Of The Damned’, their first single in 24 years this month. Figuring it would be a good way to test public interest for some Acid Reign shows, H was overwhelmed by the response they received. “We figured we’d put one song out to test the water. If no-one cared, we figured we’d play a couple of shows but not bother recording anything. We put ‘Plan Of The Damned’ out expecting the reaction to be, ‘Yeah it’s

alright but we only want to hear the old songs’ but it was, ‘this is fucking great, where’s the album?’ It blew our minds! I fully expected to cop a load of shit for being the only original member of the band but no one has said anything save a couple of tossers on YouTube!”

H remains a man keen to live in the moment but is cautious about the future. “This could all end tomorrow. Our drummer Marc [Jackson] has another band and the guys have other jobs. We have four new songs, which we’ll work on after the tour with Xentrix in October. This line up is killing it and is capable of producing some great stuff which fans will love. We write and work on material together so it’s not just me calling the shots. I have my comedy act and my podcast, and the others have their projects. I’d do this for the next five or ten years but I can’t speak for my colleagues. We’re playing it by ear until Hammerfest; after that we’ll see if people still want to see us.”

We’ll see you in the pit! 🇬🇧

**Acid Reign release their new 7” ‘Plan Of The Damned’ on Dry Heave this month**  
[www.Xentrix.co.uk](http://www.Xentrix.co.uk)  
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HAVING TRANSFORMED BLACK METAL'S CRAGGY, HARROWING TERRITORIES WITH THE MELODIC THROES OF 2013 BREAKTHROUGH 'SUNBATHER', NOTHING COULD PREPARE CALIFORNIA'S **DEAFHEAVEN** FOR THE LIFE-ALTERING TURN OF EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED ITS RELEASE. FRONTMAN GEORGE CLARKE EXPLAINS HOW THIS TURBULENT TRANSITION PROVED SO INSTRUMENTAL IN SPAWNING THEIR NEXT ANTICIPATED OUTING

Words: Faye Coulman

# "WE TAPPED OF A DISSECTION, EN THIS TIME

"I don't think there's anything wrong with wanting your music to be a certain way and being staunch about it, but I've just always liked looking past that and thinking, what's the next step that someone could take with exploring the foundation that's been laid?" observes compositional maverick George Clarke on his daring experiments within a subgenre that's long been dictated by the most stringent of purist rules and conventions. The Deafheaven frontman is, of course, referring to the hallowed Nordic territories of classic black metal. And as an act famed for freely interspersing these frostbitten trappings with the sumptuous melodic warmth of their sun-soaked Californian homelands, it's no surprise that the five-piece have suffered more than their share of elitist backlash since forming back in 2010. Having made impressive critical ripples from the earliest

stages of their fledgling career, the Americans performed an unthinkable commercial feat in scoring mainstream acclaim with 2013's globally lauded 'Sunbather'. With glowing reviews and multiple accolades pouring in from all corners of the press, Deafheaven's resounding success in mainstream and underground circles alike blurred these once clearly divisible boundaries beyond recognition. So on an evening that finds the frontman fresh from confounding purists yet again with a playful snap of the quintet fraternising with genre legend Abbath, it's clear the Californians have no qualms when it comes to making their unorthodox musical presence felt.

"We were playing Heavy Montreal and had just finished up our set for the day, when suddenly we saw Abbath sitting by himself in full make-up just drinking a beer and people-watching," Clarke

recalls with a chuckle. "I was like, 'Man, we have to do this, we have to get a photo.' He seems pretty intimidating to talk to but turned out to be super-nice and really mellow, and we just chatted about the set and other really minor stuff. But because it's the internet, a lot of people were like, 'Oh man, Abbath and Deafheaven! Who knew? Abbath likes Deafheaven so this'll give them all the metal cred they need!' But he didn't know who we were and I don't think he really cared and that's cool. We just wanted a photo because we thought people would have fun with it."

But for all this casual tomfoolery, there's no mistaking Deafheaven's humble reverence for their blackened predecessors and the painstaking care with which they mix and manipulate the genre's notoriously vicious trademarks. Indeed, with its wintry strains of madly accelerating tremolo and





# DISSECTION INTO MORE EMPEROR-ISH ENERGY AROUND"

battering snares, fresh full-length 'New Bermuda' sees its creators delving still deeper into these primordial dynamics to establish a distinctly darker point of progression on from 'Sunbather's glistening melodic dreamscapes. Honed to impeccable heights of tautly aligned chemistry over many prolonged months of international touring, the riff-laden energy of these performances quickly began to infiltrate the musical output that followed.

"That's a huge part of it," the frontman agrees. "You play guitar so much that you naturally want to accentuate that and create a much more guitar-driven record and I think we tapped into more of a Dissection, Emperor-ish energy this time around, as well as the occasional death metal thing. We also got back into the classics and the things we grew up listening to, so there's definitely a Slayer, Metallica kind of influence there too. At the same time we

always strive to exercise dynamic in a certain way so the songs could incorporate a lot of different things in them while working together seamlessly and writing it in a cohesive, uninterrupted way. Going from the softer parts to the heavier things, working with dynamics so it didn't feel forced or awkward was extremely important."

From caustic shrieks and brimstone-scorched spirals of reverb that subside beneath a glimmering expanse of guitars to technically bewildering tangles of abrasive fretwork, every fluidly aligned inch of 'New Bermuda' speaks volumes for the Americans' compositional merits. But while the band's finely honed control of these many and varied musical dynamics couldn't be more adept, the chaotic circumstances surrounding the album's conception proved to be anything but

seamless. Finding themselves suddenly immersed in the disorientating blur of relentless touring and glowing accolades that followed 'Sunbather's explosive reception, this career-defining breakthrough brought with it no small amount of gruelling trials and tribulations. Battling to reconcile the youthful idealism of bygone days with the hectic and wearisome practicalities that came with the realisation of this long dreamed-about ambition, George's gloomily introspective musings saw their sound propelled into increasingly dark territories.

"Where 'Sunbather' was always about the idea of striving for something better, 'New Bermuda' deals with the idea of what happens when things actually do start getting better. Since the last record, I stopped being homeless, got an apartment with my girlfriend, moved to LA, and it was sort of this 'it's all happening' kind of feeling at first, but then ►





## “THE RECORD DEALS A LOT WITH COMPLACENCY AND THE IDEA OF FALSE PROMISE”

it doesn't all happen. The record deals a lot with complacency and the idea of false promise and thinking that, 'Well if I have all these things then surely my life is perfect now.' But 'New Bermuda' is more realistic than that in that it deals with the truth of everyday life. Our lives have been very zero to a hundred and back to zero again, so it's either all go or all stop and I think that kind of fucks with you after a while, there's no consistency and so it's weird. You're headed towards a destination where things are perfect but the realities of life interrupt that and this record is all about dealing with the recourse of that.”


**W**ith the gilded trappings of success having manifested in 'Sunbather' as a darkly magnetic presence glimpsed longingly through the grand and distant windows of California's richest residents, it's clear that their tantalising lustre has long since faded. For while there's no doubting George's appreciation for his newly improved personal circumstances, it seems there's a spiritual price to be paid in the attainment of financial comfort and security. Exposing the lack of something infinitely trickier to calculate or quantify, 'New Bermuda's emotionally charged arrangements find their deepest roots in the composer's troubled relationship with material wealth.

“You want to be angry at it, but it's hard to argue with comfort,” George admits of this corruptive necessity. “Nowadays, it's more like,

I have that comfort so what's not right? If you have the material, what's lacking? Your *brain*,” he adds with a wry laugh. “That's the sad truth of it. There's deeper issues that you have to confront and exploring that through the music has been a pretty exposing experience. I think it's very open, very vulnerable and every single song has to do with the sort of things you don't want to talk about, things I couldn't bring up in casual conversation, my insecurities and anxieties and all that, but luckily I'm able to do that on the record. The lyrics are very personal, but I write them in a way that they can be open to interpretation and I've always invited people to do that. But from my personal standpoint they're very vulnerable so when people first get to listen to the record and begin dissecting it, it's really them dissecting you in a way and it's hard to face that sometimes.”

Finding a vivid visual representation in the abstract brushstrokes of 'New Bermuda's accompanying cover art, it's through detailed and thickly daubed sculptural forms that George set about exorcising his darkest introspective anxieties. With this haunting vision having been brought to fruition by acclaimed artist Allison Schulnick, the densely applied multitude of textures showcased here visibly abounds with tortured musings and ink-black melancholia. The lyricist expands, “I knew I wanted a painting, something thick and sculptural and ugly, yet beautiful and messy and distorted, and to me it just feels like breathing fake air. I can

feel something suffocating that comes with that type of paint application and that type of physical expression on the canvas. I have a friend who knows Allison Schulnick who did the painting and he showed me some of her stuff and I was like, this is perfect, this is exactly what I was thinking about. So, just for reference, I gave her this painting of a man who's sitting at a piano where I found myself doing the exact same thing during times of anxiety or depression, and was really struck by what she created from that.”

But as much as Deafheaven's immersive craft may be thoroughly drenched in emotional torment and suffocating atmospheres, George is equally quick to acknowledge the infinitely more positive energy surrounding 'New Bermuda's rapidly approaching release. With these exciting and eventful developments now within tantalisingly imminent reach, he anticipates, “As soon as the record's out we'll be touring endlessly and going back to the grind and I just cannot wait. I'm really excited to play these new songs live, we haven't had the chance to yet and I want to so bad, it's like a breath of fresh air. I get to see friends and meet new people and visit beautiful countries, so as much as the record is extremely bitter and such, I really do recognise all the awesome parts about this experience. It's truly amazing.” 

**'New Bermuda' is out now on ANTI-  
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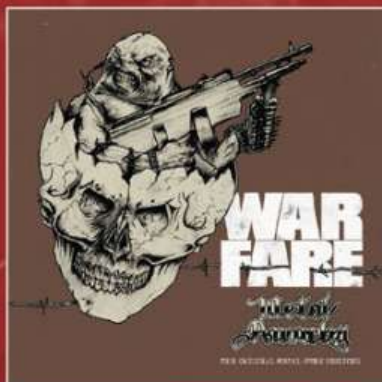
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# “WE WANT TO GO DEEPER INTO THAT PSYCHEDELIA AND MADNESS”

ATTEMPTING TO PICK APART AND DECIPHER PRECISELY WHAT MAKES A MUSICAL ENTITY TICK IS SELDOM A SIMPLE PROCESS, AND WHEN THE BAND IN QUESTION IS SO RICHLY IMMERSED IN ECTOPLASMIC ECHOES AND SCALDING TEXTURAL COMPLEXITIES, **TERRORIZER** WAS MORE THAN GRATEFUL TO HAVE **DARK BUDDHA RISING**'S **VESA AJOMO** ON HAND TO HELP NAVIGATE THESE MIND-BENDING SONIC TERRITORIES.

**Words: Faye Coulman**


**W**e want to go deeper into that psychedelia and madness, that's the place I want to go," remarks visionary founder Vesa Ajomo on the unearthly horrors and occult whisperings that abound in Dark Buddha Rising's crushing, ritualistic compositions. Glimpsed through dusky, convoluted passages of abrasive grooves, pulsating blasts and coldly ambient symmetries, every step of the Finns' sprawling back catalogue has intensified and cemented their instinctive connection with these otherworldly energies. Culminating in a blood-soaked live spectacle of grave-scented distortion and visceral riffs, 2013 breakthrough 'Dakhmandal' saw the band bewitch audiences across the continent throughout their high-profile stint alongside US experimental legends Neurosis. Now equipped with a newly reshuffled line-up, the six-piece's most recent creative phase finds Ajomo and co. delving still deeper into these hypnotising musical territories with two-track epic 'Inversum'. With restlessly continual motion and crackling spontaneity remaining integral ingredients in the mix, such fluidly instinctive methods have long been key to sustaining DBR's artistic output.

"Dark Buddha has always been this thing we

think of as a process," the founder explains. "And with every album we progress towards something, even though I don't know exactly what that is because we haven't reached it yet. There were some really profound things that we decided on when we first started the band – everything must be linked and to make progress and work towards something that we must overcome. Like with this 'Inversum' album that we recorded in our rehearsal place, for example. The sound quality is not the best, but we have to go through these things and follow our instincts because this kind of intuition is very important for us. I try but can't quite comprehend how everything comes together because it's something that just happens when we jam together and inspire each other."

But however slippery and elusive in design, there's no mistaking the newly amplified depths of atmosphere and bristling urgency that underpin the band's latest long-player. With the recent addition of a new vocalist and keyboard player having further enriched the already expansive scope of these defining trademarks, DBR's new incarnation saw an electrifying outing with the slew of live shows that immediately followed 'Inversum's completion. Severing all ties

with the bloody theatrics of 2013's 'Dakhmandal', the ghoulish totem of human remains now frequently seen adorning these ritualistic performances signifies something infinitely more focused and intense.

Vesa elaborates, "After our former vocalist J. Niemi stepped down, we built this totem of bones so it's been a good way to create something more for people to concentrate on, other than just four guys playing in an introspective way. In past shows, to have the blood thing over and over again meant that it was on the edge of losing its appeal, and also it was maybe too much of a theatre-ish thing that we didn't want any more. It needed to end anyway, but nowadays I think more static, not so in-your-face kind of things are going to happen on stage so people can concentrate more on the music. We've already played most of the 'Inversum' stuff in live situations because we always bring the new stuff into the set almost immediately. We want to keep creating new music all the time rather than being repeating the same set over and over again." 

'Inversum' is out now on **Neurot**  
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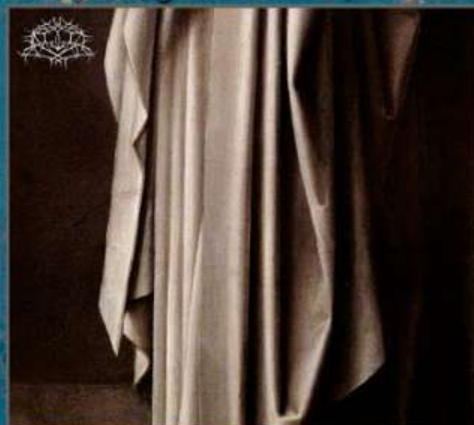


**HORNWOOD FELL**

Digipack CD

*'Yheri'*

After stunning responses caught with their s/t 2014 debut, Italy's woods-obsessed Hornwood Fell are back with a second effort. 'Yheri' even shows unexpected progressions for the band, now not only being Italy's most credible and competitive answer to 90's Norwegian black metal, but introducing atmospheric, dark, even psychedelic at times, elements and alternating clean vocals to the furious and harsh screaming they used us to. The higher-class skills of Basili's brothers make it even an unmissable album for fans of technical extreme metal, with performances on guitars & drums second to no one, while a marvellous and original artwork (packed in a digipack) makes it a nice item to collect also for the Arty-maniacs!



**KRALLICE**

Digipack CD

*'Ygg Huur'*

The undisputed weirdos of New York City assault again with uncompromising fury after 2012's "Years Past Matter". Ygg Huur is more vivid, vexing, and meticulous than most of what the band's old peers still call black metal, a sentence Krallice probably no longer need to share. This is their densest material ever, with hyperactive and coordinated guitars tucked inside sub-seven-minute windows and accompanied by a rhythm section more audacious and commanding than ever. Krallice named Ygg Huur for a three-piece suite by late Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi, remembered for his creeping, miniscule movements around a single pitch: a fitting reference for what Krallice has become. On these songs, they de-emphasize the rock'n'roll role of riffs to the point that this music works as sets of ever-shifting rhythms, gilded by slight fluctuations in pitch. (pitchfork.com)



**THE CLEARING PATH**

Digipack CD

*'Watershed between Earth and Firmament'*

Comprised of six widely conceptual yet crisply-recorded movements, the album draws energetic production and energetic qualities from the seathing hardcore persuasion of Converge, Tragedy and His Hero Is Gone, yet wholly envelops them into a modernized, blackened delivery fans of Blut Aus Nord, Enslaved and Deathspell Omega alike can attach to. (Earsplit PR)

"Watershed..." incorporates a love of Converge-heightened heaviness into his anguished odes to the great outdoors. Drums and vocal rhythms here really set this album apart from the pack while the music retains black metal's otherworldly quality without losing the attention of mere mortals like us (and presumably you)." (Decibel Magazine)



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# NO TIDES

OUR ROUNDUP OF THIS MONTH'S MOST EXCITING DEATH METAL OFFERS UP TWO FINNISH LEGENDS, BOTH RETURNING FROM THE CRYPT AFTER PERIODS OF INACTIVITY, AND A NEW FRENCH BAND THAT PLAYS OLD SCHOOL DEATH METAL WITH A SUNN O))) BACKLINE...

Words: Olivier 'Zoltar' Badin



TYRANNY



TYRANNY

AEONS IN TECTONIC INTERMENT

**F**uneral doom surely isn't the fastest genre in the world, yet that doesn't mean this gives its key characters the permission to take longer to make an album than for their skinbasher to hit their snare drums does it? Only beaten by their fellow countrymen by an extra year, it took the two-men unit resonating from the darkest abyss known as **Tyranny** a whole decade to come up with the follow-up to 'Tides Of Awakening', their monstrous debut released back in '05 on the now defunct Firedoom imprint. During that interval, their guitarist Matti Mäkelä integrated another

Finnish extreme doom squad (Profetus) and also got swallowed by the death metal vortex known as Corpssessed. And while both 'Tides...' and their debut EP 'Bleak Vistae' have recently been reissued on classy double LP by Blood Music, since 2006 they've been sparsely doing gigs with the help of two Corpssessed musicians, ten in total so far, including Roadburn last year. Still, that doesn't explain it all and unsurprisingly, Mäkelä confesses that giving birth to album number two, 'Aeons In Tectonic Interment', was such a long and tortuous labor of love that ultimately cost them much more than expected. "You can only work on music when the inspiration flows and it feel right. It took us ages to complete this album and at times it felt we would never be able finish it but here it is. The slow recording work spans from 2005 all the way to 2015, and actually the riff that ends the album is one of our earliest compositions from 2002, which finally found its place here on this album, closing a circle... From the start I knew this work would either destroy or transform us but it needed to be done.

After everything was complete, we had a long discussion about the future with [the band's co-founder] Lauri Lindqvist and he decided to 'retire' from all band activities, something he had been considering for a long time already. He wanted to complete this album with me as his final monument though, seeing how good it was. And now the weight of Tyranny rests solely on my shoulders." Clocking at 'only' 51 minutes, the result is almost short by funeral doom standards. "I didn't want the songs to be long just for the sake of being long. My aim was to make the compositions tighter, flowing and memorable yet heavy without the use of excessive repetition, though still keeping the basic structure very minimalistic. We actually recorded an extra song but it didn't fit the mood of the rest of the album so we've put it aside for now." Even if it still demonstrates its difference from the stark and primitivism of forerunners Thergothon by adding subtle slices of symphonic keyboards, you can hardly call it a departure from the rest of their succinct discography. "I disagree. If you compare the new to the first one, you can sense the evolution right away, though the initial basic idea is still there in the background – rooted in minimalistic compositions which build upon layers. Where the earlier material was perhaps more monolithic, the new album progresses more in different otherworldly directions – each song being their own entirety."

Although his now former colleague gave Matti "his blessing" to carry on, he admits that he still doesn't know exactly how he "will run things in the future yet". Besides, his focus for the time being is on Corpssessed, who are working on new material and touring Europe with Cruciamentum in November.

**A**nother Finnish act releasing their second album this Autumn are Lahti's **Necropsy** – except that this lot have





been around since 1987! Okay, this includes their first two years as Anxiety and then a fourteen-year (cough, cough) break in between 1994 and 2008 but still, they're going back a loooooong way. To be fair, until their first proper full-length 'Bloodwork' in 2011, they had been either totally ignored or remembered only by the early Finnish death metal scene maniacs as that 'lost' act that shared a split CD with cult fellow countrymen Demigod back in '92. So as their founding member and guitarist Janne Kosonen gladly admits, when Century Media offered in 2013 to gather all their pre-break recordings on a massive compilation ('Tomb Of The Forgotten'), it proved to be quite handy: "Our debut hadn't received much attention due to our then label failing to promote it properly so that compilation helped us getting more attention."

Every now and then after a gig, younger metalheads come to talk saying how surprised they were when they discovered how old the band is whereas older fans must have thought: 'Hey, I remember this band, I had their demos!' Maybe we've gained some respect or maybe it simply shone a new light on us, I don't know." They wasted no time though using it as a platform: encouraged by their new label, they decided to put out the four tracks they had recorded in August the year before as an EP ('Psychopath Next Door') and are now releasing their second proper album 'Buried In The Woods', a solid slab of classic death metal that doesn't try to play the old school card: "I'm getting tired of people continuously comparing us to the typical Finnish death metal sound, although I believe people's perception started to change a bit with our previous EP. But




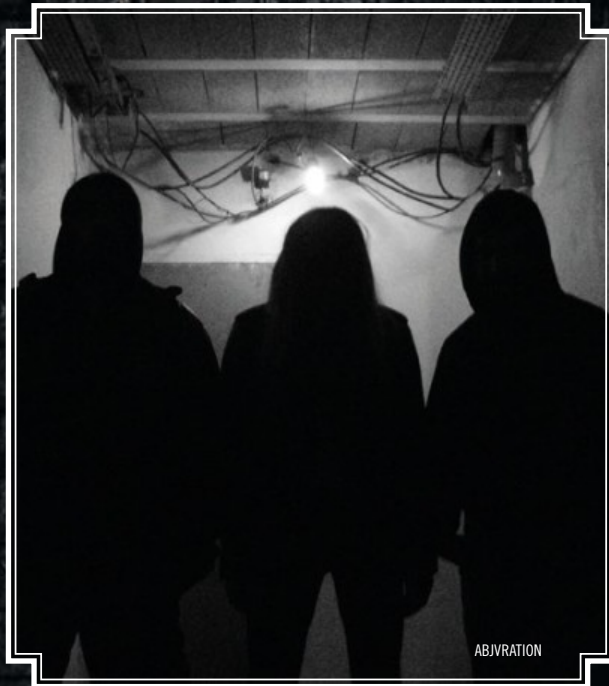
## ***"IN A NUTSHELL, OUR MUSIC IS LIKE BLACK COBRA FUCKED BY BOLT THROWER"***

we had such a long break... I guess that with 'Bloodwork' we were still learning how to play this style of music again. Compared to it, the new album is much tighter. But you know, we do this because we love to play death metal, even if I mostly listen to the old bands from the '80s and '90s like Cannibal Corpse, Deicide or Autopsy. Is the new album old school? I think so but in its own, unique way."

**T**here are two things **Abjuration** really despise: spelling and bass players. Especially bass players as a matter of fact, as confirmed by KK, formerly of Huata and one of the two guitarists of these Gallic deathsters: "for both me and the other guitarist, bass was our first instrument and neither of us wanted to fulfill that role in the band. Plus right from the start we wanted to make a difference soundwise as our aim was to mix pure death metal riffing with the kind of backline you would associate more with sludge or doom: we actually are using Sunn O))) amplifiers because Burning Witch is the only band we all agree upon! In a nutshell, our music is like Black Cobra fucked by Bolt Thrower." After a first exclusive song for the compilation 'Prima Giedi' in 2014, they spent six months working on their debut 26-minute long EP 'The Unquenchable Pyre', released on tape through Impious Desecration (France) in Europe and Caligari in the US, Me Saco Un Ojo (UK) for the LP and Mordgrimm (UK) for the CD, with a super dark and dirty

result that may "surprise the casual Behemoth fan".

Unsurprisingly, the pyre mentioned in the title refers to that "one fire nothing can extinguish nor satisfy, like a starving beast that can't stop devouring men and women as long as some keep on pretending to know what the norm is and condemn those who don't follow it. And yes, it obviously is a reference to religious fanaticism." With two out of three members also serving in Funeralium and each spread all over the country, it's still unclear if Abjuration will ever play live or if and when they'll come up with a follow-up but "once the new Funeralium album will be done, we'll probably have a shot sometimes in 2016." 





HAUNTED HOUSES, BROKEN LIMBS AND THE DARKNESS OF MODERN TIMES HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO BLACK BREATH'S DEVASTATINGLY GOOD NEW OPUS 'SLAVES BEYOND DEATH'. TERRORIZER GETS THE LOWDOWN FROM THE SEATTLE TROUPE

Words: Kevin Stewart-Panko

BLACK BREATH

# SLAVES TO

**W**hen we last left Seattle's Black Breath (studio report, issue #256), the cuddly sons of crusty crossover death we just settling into Kurt Ballou's GodCity Studios in Salem, MA to begin tracking their third full-length. Amongst the concerns going into the recording were issues pertaining to the material not yet being entirely solidified, how drummer Jamie Byrum's leg was going to hold up and the supposedly haunted accommodations the band was living in during their stay. For the purposes of having this publication show the supernatural a different sort of respect, let's start with the least concrete element contributing to what eventually came to be 'Slaves Beyond Death'.

"We stayed in a couple places," commences guitarist Eric Wallace, "The Salem Inn and the John Edwards House. Although the Inn was quite pleasant at first glance, there are a few well-documented characters said to haunt the joint. I heard my fair share of strange noises and bumps in the night, but I didn't come face-to-face with any ghosts, though we all seemed to have extremely

fucked up dreams while staying there. Supposedly, a man abused and murdered his wife there and I read stories of a little boy and a cat still haunting the place. [Bassist] Elijah [Nelson] and I tried to stay up late one night drinking the house brandy provided in the lobby in order to meet the apparition said to roam the hallways, but all we succeeded in doing was emptying their bottle!"

"The John Edwards House was this gigantic three story house built in the mid-1800s which we were fortunate enough to have to ourselves," explains Byrum. "It appeared to be furnished from decades past as well and made for a very cool atmosphere to devote ourselves solely to this project. It was also half a block away from an extremely old cemetery. I definitely spent some nights wandering it in the snow, drinking wine to clear my head."

"It also had rooms on the top floor and that's where three of us slept," adds vocalist Neil McAdams. "There was a small attic hatch in the ceiling that would stare at me for hours. At night, you could hear things scratching around behind the

walls. It was probably rats, but you never know."

Whether on stage or off, in the studio, or doing 'panic mode' relaxing/last minute song writing in century-plus homes while the apparitions of early America float around picking at their split ends and wondering about the disappearing hooch, there's never a dull moment in Black Breath's world. By most reports, the 'Slaves Beyond Death' sessions went as smoothly as possible considering the potential of everything to be derailed at the hands, or feet, of an ailing drummer.

"At the beginning of the year, I was run over by a car and had my left leg broken in four places," recalls Byrum. "I spent three months in a wheelchair, another three on crutches and had to go through physical therapy to basically learn how to walk again. That complicated drumming for sure. By the time we got to the studio, I was walking without the aid of crutches, but definitely still in recovery. By the fourth day of tracking drums, my leg started really giving me problems; by the final day, it barely worked at all. That was extremely stressful. At one point, I thought we were going





# THE GRIND

to have to axe a song because I simply couldn't play it. The blast parts in 'Reaping Flesh' only exist because I couldn't play the double bass part I wrote, so I started hammering these blasts out of sheer frustration and anger."

"I thought it went smoother in some regards and little more hectic in others," says Wallace, hinting that their third time at GodCity was as charmed as it wasn't. "We spent fourteen days in the studio, but due to a miscommunication I thought we had one more day than we actually did to mix. That was a little stressful when I realized we were supposed to be done with everything in an hour, not another full day! Overall, I thought it went pretty well; just extremely long days and not a ton of sleep. By the end of the two weeks I couldn't feel my fingertips from playing so damn much!"

**W**hen Black Breath first emerged with 2008's 'Razor To Oblivion' EP and the 'Heavy Breathing' debut in 2010, theirs was a twisted homage to thrash, hardcore punk and even the blues filtered through Swedish

death metal. Before the HM-2 metal revival reached saturation status, Black Breath was buzzsaw-ing it up from behind a frontline wall of hair and tongue-in-cheek occult imagery. 2012's 'Sentenced To Life' saw their approach bottlenecked by the legacy and energy of extreme music's prominent "Black"s; Sabbath and Flag, that is. 'Slaves Beyond Death' sees the band exploring more involved and expansive material but tempering it with an old-school death metal sound. Each of its eight songs spins a dynamic musical web, hugging swooping corners and hair-pin tempo turns while dropping greasy patch jackets off of sky-high peaks and scaling down walls of harsh-sounding gorges.

Tracks like 'Pleasure, Pain, Disease' and 'Seed Of Cain' are calculated and intricate without falling into a Gordian prog-death trap. As well, the band triumphantly steps over the current crop of revivalists simply cribbing the blueprint with album closer 'Chains Of The Afterlife,' an epic instrumental steeped in mournful peals and reminiscent of Metallica classics 'The Call Of Ktulu,' 'Orion' and 'To Live Is To Die.'

"Since the songs are all longer, it didn't seem like a good idea to write six-plus minute songs with all fast parts," reasons Wallace. "So, we tried to mix it up a little more to keep things moving along, and to challenge the patterns we might fall into while ▶

**"IT'S A BIT OF A 'CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE' SCENARIO AND 'VERY METAL' AS YOU GUYS SAY IN ENGLAND"**



# "WE ALL LIVE SO CLOSE TO DEATH AND AS TIME GOES BY YOU SEE IT COMING NEARER AND NEARER"

arranging. The writing for this record was a bit of an ongoing experiment as we went from start to finish and the only thing we were going for was a more expanded, more blown-up version of our approach to creating heavy songs and riffs."

"We absolutely pushed the envelope – for us, anyway – in the speed department," says Byrum. "The majority of the riffing and BPMs are noticeably faster than anything we've done before. Looking back at it now, the record almost reminds me of a more sped up, death metal version of Trouble's 'The Skull', which was absolutely an influence, in regards to the use of melody and the way it moves along in a more grandiose way."

"There seemed to be a similar amount of scrambling this time around," picks up Wallace. "Knowing we could get things done under pressure helped for sure. Once again, we basically constructed an entire track during our time at the studio and would pretty much lay all the vocal ideas down at night."

"Yeah, the vocals on the title track were the first takes I had ever done like that," laughs McAdams. "The record has such a different feel than our old stuff that I had to try something new. I spent a lot of time singing Roy Orbison, Sam Cooke and Creedence Clearwater Revival to stay warmed up. I had a couple of songs sort of worked out, but it wasn't until late nights around the kitchen table that the vocals got worked out and lyrics solidified. I had never sung any of the songs before tracking, but I was expecting that, so I knew what I was in for."


To go along with 'Slaves Beyond Death's powerful, yet studied, sonic bleakness, the album's theme entangles the dwindling sanity of the collective American conscious, the juxtaposition of a serial killer's horrifying acts with daily banality, and the lump of coal in the afterlife's stocking.

"Life in America, for me, feels a lot bleaker and darker now than it has in years past," sighs Byrum. "These days poverty, addiction, suicide, homelessness, disease and gentrification are real issues in this psychotic, murderous police state, and all things members of the band have had to deal with to some degree. That's bound to reflect in our art."

"Jamie is right," affirms McAdams. "Everything in the States is super-fucked. You can't live here and not be touched by these horrific things. As I get older, it gets clearer and more terrifying. It's like waking up one day and realising you're living in a Philip Dick novel and everything is fucked. This madness is in our blood and it's all influence. Every kid shot on a corner, every corpse fished out of the bushes off the highway, the hate and violence is just inches away from lashing out and leaving you jumped, stabbed, raped, shot or dead. We all live so close to death and as time goes by you see it coming nearer and nearer."

"The overall theme emerged while Jamie and I ate Vietnamese takeout on these meth stairs overlooking the industrial part of Seattle," he continues. "We started talking about Gary Ridgeway, the Green River Killer, and all these

tweaked out motherfuckers started crawling out of the bushes and we bounced. I spent the next four months going down the serial murder rabbit hole with a notebook in one hand and a grass pipe in the other. The Pacific Northwest has a twisted history of serial murder. The D.C. sniper [John Allen Muhammad] applied for a cook job that I eventually worked. We grew up in the shadows cast by Ted Bundy, Gary Ridgeway and Kenneth 'The Hillside Strangler' Bianchi. Ridgeway is in a prison not far from where I sit now. He killed upwards of 80 women over a period of twenty-plus years. If you ever fly into Seattle, where you land is where he hunted. If you ever drive east out of town, you're driving the same route Bundy used to cover up his necro-maniacal deeds. These people are real and far more horrifying than any imaginary Christian devil."

"Neil writes everything, but basically brings pages and pages of material and it all goes through a bit of a screening process with the rest of us," says Byrum about the lyrics and themes. "'Slaves Beyond Death' leaves a lot of room for imagination whether it be being a slave to a corrupt and harsh society, or a slave trapped in a basement being tortured before and after death. Basically, you're a slave on Earth and slave in the afterlife. It's a bit of a 'choose your own adventure' scenario and 'very metal' as you guys say in England!" 

**'Slaves Beyond Death' is available now on Southern Lord**  
[www.BlackBreath.com](http://www.BlackBreath.com)





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# “IT’S LIKE THE OLD TIMES ALL OVER AGAIN”

...SO SAYS LEE DORRIAN ON HIS NEW PROJECT, WHICH ALSO FEATURES FORMER ELECTRIC WIZARD MEMBERS TIM BAGSHAW AND MARK GREENING. TERRORIZER IS EXCITED TO GET THE TABLOID-FREE STORY BEHIND THIS NEW DOOM SUPERGROUP...

WORDS: JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS PICS: ESTER SEGARRA

It's Lee Dorrian! Singing in a new band! Okay, yes, there was/is Septic Tank, but that was always an occasional thing and only released an EP. And okay, yes, With The Dead is much more than just Lee Dorrian's new thing, featuring as it does Tim Bagshaw and Mark Greening, both ex-Ramesses and ex-Electric Wizard, with the guitarist actually being responsible for all the creepy shit-heavy riffage you can hear on this new band's first-ever self-titled full-length album. But come on, it's Lee Dorrian, singing in a new band! Isn't that exciting?

"It's weird actually," Lee deadpans, with a chuckle afterwards. But we can tell he's as excited as we are. He's just busier than we are, too. "To be honest, we've made the record, but I have been so busy with Rise Above that I haven't really had time to digest all the stuff that comes with it. I haven't had time to think about what I'll say in interviews and everything; it's all kind of spontaneous at the moment. Also, because I don't know a lot of things for now – I don't know how far this will go, if we will play live or not, I don't know any of these things. It's like the old times all over again, but without any pre-planned notion. But we never used to have any pre-planned notion in the old days anyway, so I guess it's all the same then," he laughs.

So that's a few of our most important questions for this interview shot down in the very beginning, but that's okay. There's always stuff to talk about with the great Lee. Let's rewind to the very beginning of With The Dead and figure out how this all got going.

"I wasn't involved, in terms of being in the band, in the first place," he explains. "Tim lives in New Jersey, in the United States, these days, and he flew back a couple of times and had a jam with Mark, and they really wanted to get something together to do a project. Tim had written a bunch of material, and one of them was going to do the vocals on the record initially. They kept asking me if I wanted to do the vocals, and I was like, 'I haven't got the time!', but as time went on and I started hearing the recordings of the demos Tim had made, I thought fucking hell, this is really killer. It was so heavy! First of all, I really wanted to release it on Rise Above regardless, because it sounded so great, and then I eventually told them I would like to be involved in it, because the riffs were just so killer and the overall intensity of the music was exactly where my head was at. There's been so much shit in my life in the last couple of years, there was a lot of shit inside me that I wanted to get out – a lot of frustration, a lot of disillusion, so it seemed like a perfect vehicle just waiting for me to get in there and get involved."

That's right – judging from the zombie promo pictures and song titles, 'With The Dead' might seem like a sort of horror movie-inspired affair, but it's actually quite personal, and full of bile and vitriol at that.

"There's nothing positive, lyrically, on this record," Lee states clearly. "It's mainly about the things that get you down, and it's my way of fighting back. If people have crossed me over the years, if they have fucked with me or if I see things around me, just the way people are towards each other, towards me, or even the way I've been towards people myself. It's just negativity that's built up inside of me that came roaring out on this record. I suppose there isn't much on this album that's very different from what Cathedral has been about before."

It was all pretty spontaneous too, the singer recalls: "I spent a few months thinking about ideas for the songs. I wasn't writing anything down, I was just listening to the recordings, doing some scratchy demos and thinking about ways to approach them. I liked the vibe, so I just gave them a little time in my head to resonate and to make me think about how to go about them, what kind of intensity I wanted to put across. Then, after that period, I just sat down with a song each time, and I spent no time at all writing the lyrics. No more than twenty minutes each, really, barely any rehearsals either. I think I rehearsed about two tracks. The ▶





“THERE’S BEEN SO MUCH SHIT IN MY LIFE IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS — A LOT OF FRUSTRATION, A LOT OF DISILLUSION, SO IT SEEMED LIKE A PERFECT VEHICLE”

last song on the album, I wrote that in five minutes and just took it to the studio without rehearsal. In the studio, I did the vocals in about two hours, I wanted to keep a raw energy about the whole thing. All of the backing tracks were recorded onto tape and there was no fucking around. There’s mistakes, quite a few of them, but we wanted to keep them. We wanted to capture the live and aggressive nature of the songs.”

**A**s it is obvious from a couple of mentions already, Lee doesn’t mind at all bringing any of the band members’ past endeavours to the conversation. There’s no false pretence here, no skirting around the fact that these people have been in important bands and that their new band might sound a little bit like them.

“There’s obviously always going to be elements of Ramesses, Electric Wizard, Cathedral or any bands we’ve ever been in before, because it’s the people playing on the records and obviously this is going to come through somehow,” he says without a care. “But hopefully it doesn’t sound exactly like any of those bands, I personally don’t think it does. I mean, it’s a heavy doom album, of course we’re going to get comparisons. If it was a folk record, it wouldn’t sound like any bands we’ve been in before, but because it’s a heavy record, with the emphasis on heaviness, that’s going to happen, and it’s true, I’m not going to say it doesn’t sound anything like them. But because it was so spontaneous, I think it sounds fresh. There isn’t anything particularly original about it, but there’s a lot of fire in it, and that comes from our hearts. There’s quite a few bands that play this kind of style, but I can say that we put 100 per cent of ourselves on this one and expressed ourselves the

way we wanted to express ourselves. There’s nothing done in any kind of way to be hip, or clever, or suit any kind of trend or to be anything else other than what we are. The sole purpose was to write the most devastatingly heavy and crushing record that there is.”

No discussions about ‘musical direction’, no big plans, no sitting around plotting about great depth in songs. Just get on with it, right?

“All the music came from Tim, so there wasn’t any kind of discussion telling him what kind of direction I’d like him to go in, because I like what he does anyway,” Lee says. “The only thing I said was for the last song on the album, I just told him to write an extremely slow song, that was probably the only comment I made. If this does continue and we do something else, it will probably be a little different and I might have some more input in the direction, but I didn’t really feel there was any need with this one. It was all there, and it was all killer.”

Even with all the “if’s at the moment, and Lee understandably not wanting to commit to doing anything, ‘With The Dead’ is already a massive achievement that a large percentage of doom bands would kill to have. So it’s easy to predict things happening in the future, regardless of what kind of specific ‘things’ we might be talking about.

“We’ll see how the album’s received, and then we’ll think more about it. It would be great to do some live shows, but we’ll take it one step at a time. This isn’t a band with any kind of plan for the future,” Lee repeats. “We made a killer record, and that’s the main thing, and the first thing out of the way. I’m not a teenager, so I have no hunger to be going out on endless tours and try to prove something, I spent most of my life doing

that already.”

Of course, one good opportunity to premiere With The Dead on stage would be the next Roadburn Festival, which Lee will be curating (finally, damn it!), ruling over a series of two ‘Rituals For The Blind Dead’ to the delight of all the Roadburn family. For now, the vocalist leaves the idea in the air that Septic Tank might be a possibility, and the expected “we’ll see” for With The Dead. But regardless of what happens, it’s going to be awesome.

“Obviously I’m extremely honoured to be asked to do that. My relationship to Walter goes back a long way,” Lee says, referring to Walter Hoeijmakers, the festival’s artistic director. “Cathedral played the very first Roadburn in 1999.” That’s not to say however they will make a return surprise visit. “Completely out of the question,” Lee says immediately. “Forget that. Cathedral will never do another gig again unless someone dies and there needs to be a benefit show or something like that,” and we kindly remind him that there are some fans so die-hard that they might start wishing for that to happen. “I take that back then,” he laughs back. “The creative spark in Cathedral ended when it needed to. We did all that we needed to do. I don’t really see the point in any kind of reunion, to come back three or four years later just because someone offered you twenty grand or whatever. The band meant more to us than that.”

It’s okay, we’re at peace. Cathedral belongs... with the dead. ☪

**‘With The Dead’ is out now on Rise Above**  
[www.Facebook.com/WithTheDead](http://www.Facebook.com/WithTheDead)



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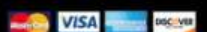
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**WITCHSORROW'S FUZZED-OUT, SABBATHESQUE VIBRATIONS COULDN'T BE MORE THOROUGHLY CAKED IN THE PRIMORDIAL MURK OF THEIR INFLUENTIAL PREDECESSORS. HAVING FILTERED THESE CLASSIC TRAPPINGS THROUGH A NIGHTMARISH VISION OF THEIR OWN DESIGN, THE HAMPSHIRE DOOM MOB EXPLAIN HOW THEY'RE KEEPING THIS MONOLITHIC LEGACY ALIVE, ONE RIFF AT A TIME.**

Words: Faye Coulman



FOR  
ME

**"T**here's some bands that, just by proxy of being a heavy metal fan, you're going to be in some way influenced by, so saying you like Iron Maiden or Metallica is almost like saying that you're a fan of sunlight or breathing oxygen. It's all around you, that's the dirt from which you've grown," remarks Witchsorrow frontman Nick "Necroskull" Ruskell on the genre-defining influences that have long been ingrained in the fibres of his creative being. Sprawling across a pitch-black plethora of tombstone-heavy grooves, snaking contortions and grainy, visceral textures, these varying threads of traditional metal and classic doom are easily identifiable in the band's richly nostalgic compositions. Sizzling with brimstone-scorched strains of early Sabbath, Electric Wizard and Reverend Bizarre, Witchsorrow's immersive craft has undergone considerable progression and refinement since first coalescing out of their respective influences back in 2006. Following on from the mirthless throes of 2012's 'God Curse Us', the band's most recent creative phase finds these apocalyptic energies in explosive shape with third long-player 'No Light, Only Fire'.

"I wanted to keep it as close to that classic, rootsy doom thing as possible, but at the same time, there's a lot of faster, more up-tempo stuff on this album in the sense of normal heavy metal songs," Nick explains. "To 'The Gallows', for example, is more in the vein of bands like Bathory or Primordial. Also, the first track, 'There Is No Light, There Is Only Fire' was originally part of another song that had a riff that sounded like Revelation. So we wrote the whole thing but then, after playing it for about three weeks, Dave [Wilbraham – of "Wilbrahammer"], our drummer, just finally turned his nose up and said, 'I don't like the rest of that, I just like that fast bit. Can we make that the whole song?' And generally, when somebody says something like that, I instantly go, 'No, for fuck's sake!' but then eventually come back with my tail between my legs and admit that it actually sounds a lot better that way."

From the barrelling, tar-black hooks of 'There Is No Light, There Is Only Fire' to the fluidly sleek fretwork and scabrous shredding that liberally peppers 'The Martyr's' abrasive grooves, the electrifying results of the band's recent labours owe no small debt to this distinctly more structured style of writing. With its strategically placed repertoire of rousing choruses and brain-liquefying licks adding unprecedented fire and spontaneity to the mix, 'No Light, Only Fire's' infectious nods to old school metal played a pivotal role in streamlining Witchsorrow's compositions.

Of these recent refinements, Nick remarks: "They're much more classically structured songs, like verse-chorus-verse-chorus type things, whereas before I think we had a tendency to meander and drift a little. This time it was more a case of trimming down the fat, working in a much more structured way, and we really went for the heavy metal thing on this record in terms of writing style. If you listen to most Iron Maiden songs that were singles they're all very verse-chorus, the guitar solo, the cool bridge bit that builds up, etc. and that was the sort of

thing we wanted. We wanted to be as metal as possible and I think part of that was having really banging choruses."

But despite recent moves towards increasingly lean and tautly arranged material, the leaden atmospherics that have long sustained Witchsorrow's distinctively doomy craft remain an unchangeable constant in the mix. Forming a loose continuation of the apocalyptic narratives first introduced on 2012's 'God Curse Us', the latest chapter of this doom-laden sequence sees its creators delving still deeper into the genre's harrowing energies. But rather than simply surrendering to these fathomless depths of despair, 'No Light...' instead audibly bristles with angry defiance sourced from Nick's endless reserves of embittered frustration.

**O**f this inspiring venting of spleen, he observes: "On the last record, I thought the future was such a dark-looking place that I genuinely wanted the 2012 thing [Mayan apocalypse] to be real because I was just so down with everything and thought it would be a nice solution for everything to be blinked out of existence. On the last album there's this sample with a guy talking about being spared the horror of survival, but since the apocalypse never happened, 'No Light...' was written from the idea that you're sort of picking through the remains of something that was supposed to have been destroyed. On the last album, the lyrics are quite black-and-white final, whereas this time I'm slamming the door on my way out and raising two fingers to the world, which I suppose is slightly more healthy than openly calling down the apocalypse."

With doom metal's murky, monochrome dimensions once again providing the perfect canvas for these post-apocalyptic accents, 'No Light...' forms the latest in a historic line of records spawned out of this sprawling, reverb-laden legacy. Having diligently immersed himself in the study and practice of these diabolical rites from an early age, Nick's deep-rooted connection with this tight-knit, subterranean movement continues to form an endlessly fertile source of inspiration.

"Part of the thing that first drew me to bands like Cathedral, Solstice and Electric Wizard was that they all had this special British something to them," he muses. "I can remember a lot of the metal magazines at the time covered Paradise Lost quite heavily and I was really into the idea that they were this gloomy band from Yorkshire because that's where my grandparents were from. I spent a lot of time as a child driving through Yorkshire seeing the doom out the window, all these dry stone walls and the wind and rain. I felt like there was the seed of something there and when I finally heard them it was exactly how I'd imagined – like a wet Yorkshire moor with electric guitars over it. That was what drew me to doom in the beginning, and I've just always been in love with it, because it's always remained a small pool of amazing bands and that's what keeps it really special." 🎸

'No Light, Only Fire' is out now on Candlelight  
[www.Facebook.com/WitchsorrowDoom](http://www.Facebook.com/WitchsorrowDoom)



# PATIENT

WHETHER RIGIDLY CONFORMING TO PURIST GENRE RULES, DONNING CORPSE PAINT OR DABBLING IN THE OCCULT, THERE'S NO SURE-FIRE STRATEGY WHEN IT COMES TO SCORING KUDOS AND CREDIBILITY IN UNDERGROUND METAL CIRCLES. BUT RATHER THAN GAUGING THEIR WORTH IN THE CALCULATED CURRENCY OF ELITIST CLICHÉS, **SKEPTICISM** EXPLAIN WHY THEY'VE LONG PREFERRED TO LET THE HAUNTING AUTHENTICITY OF THEIR SOUND SPEAK FOR ITSELF.

WORDS: FAYE COULMAN

**“S**ome people believe it's a value in itself not to be corporate and to be underground and obscure, but that's not our line of thinking,” asserts Skepticism keyboardist Eero Pöyry of the staunchly elitist benchmarks by which a metal band's credibility is crudely measured and quantified. With historic roots in death metal's brutal genesis, a decade-long aversion to performing live and famously infrequent album releases, the Finnish doom veterans' own enticing host of cult credentials mesh only too seamlessly with these underground ideologies. But despite being a veritable box-ticker for such purist criteria, there's no mistaking the organic, fluidly instinctive vision that differentiates these influential players from the calculated agendas and egos of the movement's many posturing pretenders. And having recently performed the technically staggering feat of recording an entire album under the exposing scrutiny of a live audience, the gritty authenticity displayed here in spades far outstrips any such hackneyed cult metal cliché. Stripping their darkly atmospheric craft back to its most vital and viciously energised basic components, it's through these gruelling extremes of pressure that Pöyry and co. captured the most electrifying embodiment of their sound to date.

Of the aptly-titled 'Ordeal', the keyboardist explains, “Going onstage and knowing that if you do it horribly wrong it will destroy your album is a good place to put yourself in psychologically. Because with recording in the studio you know you can be sloppy and do it again a hundred times, but live you know that you can't and you also know that you won't have to, so you can put all your energy into one show and I really, really enjoy that aspect of it. As a musician this approach was better, though of course not everyone in the band agrees,” he laughs momentarily. “The way we usually work is that we don't have any pressure, we record new albums when we want to and generally do things when we feel like it, so we have to create that pressure ourselves and apparently it's a good thing to do.”

Unravelling across a deathly expanse of crushing fretwork and exquisite pipe organ blasts that flood the senses with the pitch-black gravity of human grief, theirs is an uncommonly immersive experience. Comprising a vivid collection of spellbinding audio and meticulously captured live footage, 'Ordeal's many and varied dynamics find a richly symbolic focal point in the album's haunting central image of an antique funeral suit. Selected to adorn its cover in starkly divided shades of black and ageing ivory, this sombre garment has long played an essential role in the summoning of these darkly absorbing energies. Serving a not dissimilar purpose to the corpse paint and ghoulish stage props favoured by black metal musicians, the ritualistic wearing of tailcoats and ties onstage communicates a profound, uninterrupted connection with their creative selves.

“I actually think it's pretty much the same thing,” Eero agrees of this genre-crossing parallel. “I doubt that many of those bands who wear corpse paint onstage would do so in their normal lives. Playing live is like a ritual kind of thing for me and this particular type of clothing suits us, it's formal wear and for me underlines the fact that we are not doing this for fun. We are doing this as best we can and trying to communicate the deepest of our

thoughts which is why we don't go onstage in our normal day to day wear. That's what separates our music from the normal day-to-day thing we do and also seems to differentiate us from other metal bands in a sense that it seems to immerse people when they see that. As a band, our stage presence is quite serious and the cover art of 'Ordeal' also strives to communicate that.”

**W**ith this epic display of visceral grit adding further authentic weight to an already historic body of work, there's unsurprisingly been no shortage of anticipation surrounding Skepticism's latest long-awaited album. Since first coalescing out of Scandinavia's burgeoning death metal scene back in 1991, the pitch-black strains of crushing doom and deathly beauty that soon began to infiltrate their sound found a genre-defining milestone in 1994 demo 'Aeothie Kaear'. Having taken ample time to subtly refine their original formula over the next two decades that followed, the Finns' influential role in pioneering the subgenre now widely known as funeral doom is nothing short of legendary. But however frequently Skepticism may have been mentioned in the same reverential breath as this notoriously grave offshoot, Eero demonstrates precious little interest in such tidily concise genre tags.

“The funeral doom thing is a stamp we got at some point, and I'm not saying that we're not, but those labels and genres are not so interesting for me. But still you think, in a historic sense, connecting us to bands like Unholy who started around the same time as we did isn't that far-fetched so there are strong similarities between us and them. On the other hand when I think of, for example, bands like Esoteric or Shape Of Despair and us, they all sound very different, so I don't feel that we are part of any sound particularly. Also, everything is quite different nowadays, because when I think of when we first started there was stuff like My Dying Bride, Paradise Lost and early Cathedral but none of those bands are playing in the style they used to anymore, so I think that the variety within whatever is called doom is quite large.”

With a uniquely developed sound that's long been impossible to pin down, it's clear that the band's famously independent and original methods continue to play an integral role in sustaining their doom-laden creative output. Stemming from a humbly sincere love of creating music, Skepticism's thriving longevity speaks volumes for these timelessly organic and unpretentious artistic values.

“I've known these guys since I was about ten years old and we've been playing in the band for over twenty,” he says. “So it's different from a situation where you form a band purely to achieve success or whatever, for us it's more of a lifestyle. I would be a hypocrite in saying that we do things in an underground way purely because we want to. If we had become highly popular in the late nineties things could be very different, but the way we do things still revolves around these methods and we're extremely happy with that.”

'Ordeal' is out now on Svart  
[www.Skepticism.fi](http://www.Skepticism.fi)



# CE IS VIRTUE

“I WOULD BE A  
HYPOCRITE IN SAYING  
THAT WE DO THINGS IN  
AN UNDERGROUND WAY  
PURELY BECAUSE WE  
WANT TO”





# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

10 PURE GENIUS  
8-9 POT OF GOLD  
6-7 PASSES THE TIME

4-5 PASS  
2-3 PISS POOR  
1 PILE OF SHITE

## ALBUM OF THE MONTH THEY LIVE...



### WITH THE DEAD

'With The Dead'

RISE ABOVE

You'd be forgiven for feeling extra gloomy back in 2013, when two of the UK's most beloved doom acts, Cathedral and Ramesses, both consigned themselves to the grave for good. But even the darkest of clouds has its silver lining, and the number of great bands that have crawled out from beneath the respective corpses of these titans is proof. We've already had Serpentine Path, Septic Tank, Death Penalty and the mind bending 11 Paranoias, and now this monstrous outing...

With The Dead sees the reunion of Ramesses guitarist Tim Bagshaw and drummer Mark Greening (who were also the original, and some may argue only, Electric Wizard rhythm section), with Lee Dorrian providing his unique, misanthropic drawl. Already sounds like a recipe for success, right? Even if this album did just sound like Ramesses or those first few Wizard records with Lee's vocals, we'd still be sold. Only, that's not the whole story here. Of course there are similarities to their former bands; Dorrian's voice is always going to bring to mind Cathedral, Tim Bagshaw carved out a pretty distinctive riffing style with Ramesses that's in full effect here and

Mark Greening's trademark grooves and thunderous rolls are recognisable a mile off. Not to mention 'I Am Your Virus' contains exactly the kind of great big fuck-off riff and planet shaking tone you would have found on 'Dopethrone', whilst humongous closer 'Screams From My Own Grave' recalls the disgusting heaviness of Lee's short-lived Teeth Of Lions Rule The Divine project. But 'With The Dead' definitely has its own energy, a vitriolic, pissed off, almost punky attitude to it that distinguishes the album from its spiritual predecessors. As Lee bellows "Fuck you!" during 'The Cross', it feels like a pretty apt statement of intent for the whole record.

It also helps that the six songs that comprise 'With The Dead' are among the catchiest and most immediate that any of the involved parties have ever written. Wrap your ears around the anthemic yet melancholy 'Nephtys', with its final coda being a dead ringer for Black Widow's 'Come To The Sabbath' (hey, it wouldn't be a Lee Dorrian record without at



least one semi-obscure '70s prog reference), or the completely flattening 'Living With The Dead' — one of those songs that, once you've heard it, you'll

find impossible to read its title in any other voice than Dorrian's sardonic refrain ("Liiiiiving with the deeeeeeyaaaaad!"). Even the aforementioned tar-thick ending number 'Screams From My Own Grave' will end up lodged in your head for some time after listening.

At a lean 42 minutes, there is absolutely no dead space on this record, not a second wasted. These guys could have quite easily just farted out some dull, 73 minute dirge, made a killing in double-splatter vinyl at Roadburn next year and slinked off into retirement. But instead, 'With The Dead' is a taut, punchy yet varied and very engaging doom album that fits snugly onto a single LP, and is more than worthy of a place in your record collection. Now, let us pray this isn't just going to be a one-off...

[8.5] KEZ WHELAN





## BLACK BREATH 'Slaves Beyond Death'

SOUTHERN LORD

**W**hile Black Breath's hostile punk spirit remains intact, musically, their third album, 'Slaves Beyond Death', is intensely focused on old school thrash and death metal traditions. This, plus the fact that Neil McAdams' vocals have devolved into a gruesome growl, makes for their heaviest release yet – no easy feat considering the crossover racket of 2010's 'Heavy Breathing' and the metallic hardcore battery of 2012's



'Sentenced To Life'.

'Sentenced...' was a blitzkrieg of buzzsaw riffage and bad intentions. Here, the songs are longer and methodically structured and the transitions between fast and slow are more dynamic and impactful as a result. Opener 'Pleasure, Pain, Disease' rampages through countless tempo changes armed with breakneck thrash riffs and devastating Swedeath grooves. Meanwhile, the portentous title track and 'A Place of Insane Cruelty' recall Obituary at their Celtic Frost-rippin' best; the former's vocal hooks rival the equally barbarous title chant off 'Reaping Flesh'.

Kurt Ballou's production techniques have

developed in tandem with Black Breath's songwriting skills, and his signature guitar tone emphasises the huge serrated riffs of 'Seed Of Cain' and 'Arc Of Violence', while the clarity he adds makes the harmonised solo sections shine.

In truth, the second half of 'Slaves Beyond Death' is not quite as gripping as its first – for instance, instrumental closer 'Chains Of The Afterlife' borrows too heavily from 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' while falling short of 'Orion' – but the savagery of the music/vocals and the ambition of the songwriting overall still makes this album a resounding success for these Seattle scumbags.

[8] DEAN BROWN

## VISIONS FROM THE DARK SIDE

JAMIE BYRUM AND NEIL  
MCADAMS TALK ABOUT COVER  
ARTIST, PAOLO GIRARDI

**NEIL:** "I sent him an email offering some ideas I had about eternal torture and suffering beyond the grave and how one might construct a prison out of space-time to enslave another person's soul."

**JAMIE:** "Paolo is an amazing artist and a total heavy metal maniac, so right from the get go I was pushing to work with him. He's done so many amazing pieces in the last couple of years [Bell Witch, Diocletian, Inquisition etc] and I really believe in that style of metal artwork. There's no one better in the world at the moment."

## AMOK 'Necrospirital Deathcore'

EDGED CIRCLE



**R**evelling in atavistic savagery, Amok's sacrilegious blackened nastiness had one purpose: to insult religion and deliver primitive yet engaging occultist material. Loosely based around the suicide cult of the Reverend Jim Jones, 'Necrospirital...' uses samples to piece the narrative together. Originally released in 2006, this album sounds like it was recorded in the early nineties, complete with a very basic necro production. The songs do tend to flow into one another but this release is not without surprises. The bluesy guitar solo in 'Providentialism' adds further atmosphere to this chilling composition. Aside from some ill-advised industrial stylings, this is a blunt, simplistic offering of thrashing black metal that has some great moments but no real staying power.

[5] ROSS BAKER

## BEATEN TO DEATH 'Unplugged'

MAS-KINA



**W**hen you forge a path that has people taking strong stances for or against your creative output, you know what you're doing is making an impact. In the case of Norway's Beaten To Death, we're on their side. Their sense of humour and playfulness, along with their deliberate willingness to rewrite grindcore's rules is something we can't get enough of. The ultra-infectious twisted indie-jazz melodies, distortion-less guitar tone, smart light-speed bursts and dual vocals have been the band's unequalled calling card since their 'Xes And Strokes' debut. 'Unplugged' hasn't refined or re-jigged anything; it's simply another batch of songs written in the inimitable style of their previous albums. And that's all there is to it.

[8.5] KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

## BLIKSEM 'Gruesome Masterpiece'

IRON WILL/ROUGH TRADE

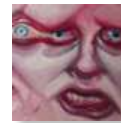


**T**his came from out of nowhere. Well, not necessarily nowhere, more like Antwerp, Belgium, but listening to the second album by Bliksem (that's Dutch for "lightning") it's astonishing more people aren't touting it. This is first-rate thrash metal in the tradition of Death Angel, in other words plenty rampaging but always mindful of melody. As strong as the songwriting is, it would be nothing without singer Peggy Meeussen, who evokes classic Doro Pesch, able to carry a melody and sound forceful at the same time. Like Royal Thunder's Miny Parsonz, it's a voice of power rather than sensitivity, and is a revelation on such highlights as 'Mistress Of The Damned' and 'Crawling In The Dirt'.

[8] ADRIEN BEGRAND

## CULT OF OCCULT 'Five Degrees Of Insanity'

DEADLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT



**F**rench sludge purveyors Cult Of Occult are on their third vitriolic outing with 'Five Degrees...', a record reserved for those moments of grim disdain for your fellow man. Each track befits its respective title ('Alcoholic', 'Misanthropic' etc), as well as contributing to the overall feeling of slowly being segregated within an ever deepening spiral of disgust. Inspired by sludge monoliths Grief and Nothgrush, primordial screams pierce the lugubrious pace of strings, balancing the urgency of a mind gone mad with the realisation that the listener is helpless during the descent. The punishing battery from the drums at the end of 'Psychotic' will leave you reeling, reminding you just how precarious the faculties of your mind can be.

[8] IAN WILLIAMS

## ANCIENT ALTAR 'Dead Earth'

BLACK VOODOO/MIDNITE COLLECTIVE

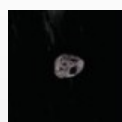


**A**ncient Altar have created a monster with 'Dead Earth', sounding as if Eyehategod were interred in a vault and left to stew over several aeons, only to emerge into an apocalyptic wasteland. This is the second effort from the L.A. four piece, and it promises any fan a hearty dose of sludgy treats. From the ominous descent of the riff throughout the track 'Leader, Liar' to the cavernous howls on the titular track, this record has a claustrophobic quality that is by no means a bad thing. The drums will hammer you into the oppressive depths whilst the guitars rip saw their way through your ears. Well worth a spin or four.

[8] IAN WILLIAMS

## BISMUTH 'Unavailing'

GRAANREPUBLIEK



**A**fter whetting our appetites with 'The Eternal Marshes' EP and a split with Undersmile, Nottingham duo Bismuth have finally dropped their first full-length on us; a mammoth double LP containing some of the heaviest slow motion riffage this side of Corrupted. Opener 'Tethys' showcases the full power of vocalist/bassist Tanya Byrne's amp collection with some serious weighty bass tones, whilst the haunting 'Of The Weak Willed' eases off the sonic punishment, allowing plaintive chords to drift across Joe Rawling's hypnotic, Bohren & Der Club Of Gore style drum beats and 'The Holocene Extinction' unfolds into an incredibly deep, enveloping drone. Those allergic to slow tempos will hate it but for the rest of us, this is essential.

[8] KEZ WHELAN

## CHILDREN OF BODOM 'I Worship Chaos'

NUCLEAR BLAST

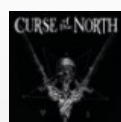


**T**ruly a powerhouse album, 'I Worship Chaos' follows up 2013's 'Halo Of Blood' with an even darker, grittier production, especially seen on the brutality of tracks 'Morrigan' and 'Widdershins'. Filled with the Hate Crew's signature show-ready fury, this effort at times recalls the ruthlessness of albums like 'Hate Crew Deathroll' while showcasing the seasoned talents of these unrelenting musicians. While this album may lack some of the diversity in tempos and moods in comparison to the 'Halo...', frontman Alexi Laiho's claim that 'I Worship Chaos' sees COB "reborn even more pissed off" remains an apt description for this remorseless record.

[7.5] JOY SHANNON

## CURSE OF THE NORTH 'Curse Of The North: I'

STATIC TENSION RECORDINGS



**S**eatle's Curse Of The North may feature former 3 Inches Of Blood bass player Nick Cates but rather than NWOBHM influenced salvos, 'Curse Of The North: I' goes the Sabbath route with pleasing results. Guitarist/vocalist Christiaan Morris has a fine set of pipes on him, demonstrating a vocal range which lends itself to triumphant stoner metal, and the soaring acoustic section of 'Into The Trees' recalls the soulful work of Baroness' John Dyer Baizley. Full of catchy riffs and hooks, this pleasant ten tracker really hits the spot, never overstaying its welcome. Showcasing some real songwriting chops and musical chemistry, this inaugural chapter could be the beginning of an intriguing career. A highly promising debut from a mean new power trio.

[7] ROSS BAKER



# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

"LIKE JACK KEROUAC  
CHANNELLING AN  
EVANGELIST PREACHER"



## CLUTCH 'Psychic Warfare'

WEATHERMAKER MUSIC

Considering the incredible momentum Maryland rockers Clutch have maintained throughout their career cumulating in 2013's fantastic 'Earth Rocker' opus, it's pleasing to report that the same raunchy grooves and energetic swagger are all over 'Psychic Warfare', which retains the direct approach of its predecessor on straight up stormers like 'X-Ray Visions'. Delve deeper however and you'll find a fresh injection of blues and funk making for a slightly more diverse collection.

The monstrous grooves of 'Your Love Is Incarceration' with its rousing call and response chorus and the blues stomper 'Our Lady Of Electric Light' are highlights.

Neil Fallon is on top form, like Jack Kerouac channelling an evangelist preacher, his soulful vocals delivering compelling tales of seedy goings on and paranoid neurosis.

The use of syncopated rhythms and intuitive communication this act exhibits is simply unparalleled. Drummer Jean Paul Gaster's uncanny knack for alternating between driving 4/4 to



irresistible swing gives the songs the bedrock on which they're built, but Clutch are simply one of those acts where each band member contributes equally to deliver an album full of banging tracks which beg you to dance.

Engaging and invigorating throughout, 'Psychic Warfare' is yet another fine feather in the cap for this seemingly unstoppable act who have to be oozing confidence right now. Declaring war on lacklustre acts which churn out lazy, insincere rock n' roll, Clutch have embraced their identity while making healthy progress between each release, distilling all the core elements of their sound into one mighty potent brew. Bottoms up!

[9] ROSS BAKER

## WAR ENSEMBLE

CLUTCH MAY HAVE PSYCHIC WARFARE COVERED, BUT THERE'S A WHOLE SPECTRUM OF WARFARE OUT THERE

### MAYHEM 'Esoteric Warfare'

Mayhem's latest proves these Norwegian pioneers aren't afraid to keep pushing the boundaries

### SLAYER 'Chemical Warfare'

The opening track from their '84 EP 'Haunting The Chapel' is still one of their most beloved songs

### BOLT THROWER 'Psychological Warfare'

A punishing onslaught from the first album, and the beginning of a career long obsession with war

### WINDS OF GENOCIDE 'Venomous Warfare'

Venomous is the word; both in that this crusty d-beat assault has more than a whiff of legends Venom

## EARLY MAMMAL 'Take A Lover'

RIOT SEASON

Amongst the never-ending series of underwhelming retro rock albums and NWOBHM rip-offs, Early Mammal's second album offers a welcome break from the drudgery. Like their debut, 'Take A Lover' is psychedelic rock record without pretence; a pacifying collection of jams which sound like latter-day Earth if Dylan Carlson replaced dustbowl Americana with the Eastern aspects of George Harrison's solo work. The hypnotic thrum of Om can also be heard in Early Mammal's deft use of instrumental repetition, and while the songs may not have the same appeal when listened to individually, there's conciseness to their craft – an overlooked necessity when it comes to a style of rock prone to aimless lysergic wig-outs.

[7] DEAN BROWN

## EVIL BLIZZARD 'Everybody Come To Church'

LOUDER THAN WAR

When Preston's Evil Blizzard tunneled out of their hometown gig scene during 2013 and '14, they took their place amidst an exciting, UK-wide web of heavy psychedelic rock. Last year's debut album, 'The Dangers Of...', wove original cloth from scraps of Hawkwind, Om and Public Image Ltd, while suggesting a springboard to greater, stranger heights. As such, 'Everybody Come To Church' feels a mite anticlimactic, in that it pulls pretty much the same tricks as its predecessor, only with less quasi-doom riffs. 'Sacrifice' is one of their finest moments to date, and Mark Whiteside's Lydon-esque vocals are still more invigorating, but we might have to wait until album three for Evil Blizzard to properly take flight.

[6.5] NOEL GARDNER

## DARK BUDDHA RISING 'Inversum'

NEUROT



A new line-up with a few crucial positions being replaced and a sort of high-profile (in our own little world anyway) move to Neurot haven't phased

these eerie Finns at all. On the contrary, all the recent developments seem to have opened wide their already considerably wide doors of creativity. The murky, ritualistic-sounding dark ambient of before is still there at the core of everything, but throughout the two twenty-something minute tracks of 'Inversum' Dark Buddha Rising travel to several hitherto unexplored dimensions, from a latter Swans-like colossal repetition cycle to a surprisingly straightforward stoner rock bit at the end, among many other things. Their menacing, unsafe psychedelia casts constant shades and provides the flow the album needs, turning into the band's most accomplished effort so far.

[8] JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS

## DIE KRUPPS 'V – Metal Machine Music'

STEAMHAMMER/OBLIVION/SPV



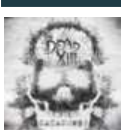
After releasing the more electro/EBM/industrial album 'The Machinists Of Joy' just under two years ago, it was

time for Die Krupps to once again pick up the metal guitars and thrash out another full on industrial rock/metal album. Reminiscent of their late '80s/early '90s output (think 'To The Hilt', 'Fatherland') but with a bigger, crunchier production. 'V' gives out what you'd expect from these consistently good pioneers of industrial – solid, pounding beats, thick danceable riffs, great synth sounds and a gloriously sneering vocal from Die Krupps main man Jürgen Engler – and like most of the alternative clubbing world, they are still obsessed with Mad Max.

[7.5] ALEX BONIWELL

## THE DEAD XIII 'Catacombs'

SELF RELEASED



Manchester's very own horror metal undead rockers unleash their nu metal/gothic tinged debut. There is more

than a passing nod to Wednesday 13 and the Murderdolls, with a healthy dose of Misfits and a dash of Coal Chamber. It's a swaggering, worm infested b-movie rock out – 'Lay Siege To Hell' is a full blown zombie party track, with great fat riffs and a sleazy synth line that will get the rotting moving. Unfortunately, too many of the songs are of a similar pace and sound, and a tad more variation would have seen 'Catacombs' chasing you across the graveyard, rather than lurking behind the tombstones.

[5] ALEX BONIWELL

## DIVISION SPEED 'Division Speed'

HIGH ROLLER



This German troupe have tapped into the chaotic vibe of the early thrash scene with such natural flair (skill would

be the wrong word, as it would suggest this was a calculated pitch, and it feels utterly convincingly organic) that any of the songs of here would have been perfectly at home on the first few 'Speed Kills' compilations. Think 'Evil Invaders' or 'Seven Churches', and you're starting to picture the right levels of blood-drenched intensity, everything ramped up to eleven, guttural vocals spat with feeling, and even a Burton-esque bass intro. That filthy production also suits the rabid material to a tee and should have modern metal fans quivering in mortal fear.

[7.5] IAN GLASPER

## AVATARUM 'The Girl With The Raven Mask'

NUCLEAR BLAST

Avatarium's 2013 self-titled debut was always going to be a tricky one to follow; so whimsical and magical was its tone, it felt like a delightful one-off, never to be repeated with quite the same impact. But 'The Girl With The Raven Mask' thankfully proves that the band's unique vision is sustainable, dropping another – equally masterful – collection of dark, yet uplifting, metallic fairytales.

Yes, doom metal is still at the root of their sound – Leif Edling's fascination with Black Sabbath underpins everything he does – but Avatarium refuse to be restricted by anything as mundane as genre tropes, Jennie-Anne Smith's voice elevating this to an ethereal plane, throbbing with raw emotional power. The strident 'Hypnotized', or the less-is-more chugging of the title track, is



probably the closest we get to Candlemass, but Avatarium put their own stamp on every single note, and the result is huge confident brush strokes on a canvas that is both bleak and epic, the majestic 'Ghostlight' one of many highlights.

[8.5] IAN GLASPER



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# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

**"SWELLS OF VOLUME  
ERUPT NEXT TO SPARSE  
PASSAGES"**



## DEAFHEAVEN 'New Bermuda'

ANTI-

While Deafheaven's last album 'Sunbather' infuriated black metal purists – it had a pink cover! – the band have proven themselves to be genuinely innovative. 'New Bermuda' might not have the wow factor of 'Sunbather', but it's still a mighty impressive piece of work. If you doubt it's black metal, listen to 'Luna', with George Clarke's ravishingly grim vocals and Daniel Tracy's ferocious blastbeat drumming. But it's also just a great rock album: there's shades here of My Bloody Valentine, Thursday or even – dare we say it? – Red Hot Chili Peppers' album 'By The Way'. The strumming at the end of 'Come Back' is one of the most melancholic yet oddly relaxing passages you'll hear on a metal album this year. Titles like 'Baby Blue', and its sampling of a radio traffic report, may seem superficial changes to a genre better known for icy hymns to Satan, but Deafheaven's innovation goes way



beyond lyrical themes or using a bit of piano occasionally. Deafheaven have managed to create music that is recognisably black metal, yet uses tonality in a very different way from what we're used to. It's not merely a case of having some unexpected musical influences; using such different chords and scales from the norm, but not stepping outside the genre, is quite a feat. Classical composers struggled to perform the same trick (admittedly on a different scale). If diehards find Deafheaven too hipster-y, that's their loss; this is another complex, layered album from a very interesting band.

[8] ED CHAPMAN

## UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

GEORGE CLARKE ON WHAT IT IS ABOUT BLACK METAL THAT LENDS ITSELF SO WELL TO EXPERIMENTATION

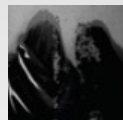
"I think it's a lot of things, I saw beautiful examples of it early on with Ulver records or Burzum, and pretty much anything that ever came out of France. The hypnotic drums and the open-chord riffing really lends itself to being manipulated a lot and the emotional chord progressions that can be experimented with endlessly. I think that's

what drew me to it, it was ferocious, it could be nasty at times but it can also be really cathartic and beautiful and orchestral. I guess I like the way that it bends and shifts. I like all styles of music in terms of metal, but for black metal for me that's what really drew me into it, I think it can be manipulated in so many different ways."

## FLUISTERAARS

'Luwte'

EISENWALD



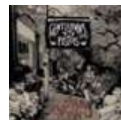
We all have a soundtrack to the cold winter nights; an album we cycle on repeat whilst trudging through the rain and snow. You'd be hard pressed to find a band better suited to this than Dutch trio Fluisteraars. Their second full-length 'Luwte' is versatile; it doesn't require full concentration to be able to appreciate its majesty but if you lend it an analytical ear you'll be rewarded with intelligent composition, lashings of atmosphere and an old-school European kick. Let's be honest, it takes a special talent to write a song which surpasses the fifteen-minute mark whilst retaining aural command, but one listen to opener 'De Laatste Verademing' and you'll be hooked for a long time to come.

[8] BETH AVISON

## GENTLEMEN'S PISTOLS

'Hustler's Row'

NUCLEAR BLAST



The third full length since the 2003 formation of Gentlemen's Pistols (with frontman James Atkinson at the helm for production), this album is an entirely natural progression for their sound. Drawing influences from bands like Wishbone Ash, The Sweet and Led Zep, 'Hustler's Row' clearly displays the veteran musicianship behind these Gents. Bill Steer's trademark guitar work can be heard in the solos and harmonies throughout the record, especially at the start of 'Private Rendezvous'. With groove laden riffs and raucous vocals, this album is a rowdy swagger down the dilapidated alley of rock 'n' roll. Fans of Gentlemen's Pistols may have waited four years for this record but it certainly has not been in vain.

[7.5] IAN WILLIAMS

## FUNERAL HORSE

'Divinity For The Wicked'

ARTIFICIAL HEAD



The Texan trio's second album is just as wonderfully confusing as their 2014 debut. Merging stoner rock with trad doom and punk influences (and bagpipes), this is an intriguing, textured and disjointed experience. 'Gods Of Savages', for example, builds into a splendidly bruising encounter, while 'Underneath All That Ever Was' is an expertly crafted exploration of human frailty. But there are elements that drain the album's energy, such as the aimless instrumental 'A Bit Of Weed', the joyless 'Cities Of The Red Night', which drifts into another Sabbath tribute, and the drawing, undercooked megaphone vocals. Sometimes galloping with wild abandon, then suddenly stopping to munch on some grass, this Funeral Horse is temperamental and unbroken.

[6.5] STEVE BIDMEAD

## GHOLD/DEAD EXISTENCE

'Split'

SELF-RELEASE



Two UK sludge heavyweights join forces for this vinyl-only split. Bass 'n' drum duo Ghold offer up 'Proud Late', a raucous, cowbell smacking' outing that storms forth with all the belligerence of early Melvins, and a cover of 'Suttee', an old recording by like-minded bass enthusiasts Man Is The Bastard. Meanwhile, Dead Existence strip Autopsy's 'Ridden With Disease' down to a queasy, apocalyptic smog, making the song their own without losing of any of the original's rancid, visceral impact, whilst the devastating 'A Bitter Thread' rivals anything on their recent 'Misery' opus. A fantastically filthy slab of wax from two bands on the top of the game – which makes it all the more gutting that Dead Existence are calling it a day!

[7.5] KEZ WHELAN

## BIG BRAVE

'Au De La'

SOUTHERN LORD

The Montreal based trio have tapped into something truly special with 'Au De La'. It's a difficult record to pin down – you could draw comparisons to the last Esben & The Witch album or much of Thee Silver Mt Zion Memorial Orchestra's recent output (this record was even recorded by that band's Efrim Menuck at the legendary Hotel2Tango), but there's a certain character this album possesses that is entirely its own.

The use of space on this thing is absolutely beautiful; just when you thought the old quiet-loud dynamic had been totally exhausted, BIGBRAVE manage to create astonishing vistas where Swans-esque swells of volume erupt next to sparse, almost non-existent passages in which you could hear a plectrum drop. And throughout the whole thing, there's this utterly joyous, devotional atmosphere



that recalls both the warmth and weight (if not the eccentricity) of latter-day Boredoms, heightened by vocalist/guitarist Robin Wattie's hypnotic, bizarrely paced and life-affirming chants. One of the most interesting new additions to the Southern Lord roster in a long time.

[8] KEZ WHELAN

## GLORYHAMMER

'Space 1992: Rise Of The Chaos Wizards'

STEAMHAMMER/SPV



As if debut album 'Tales From The Kingdom Of Fife' wasn't ridiculous enough, 'Space 1992...' sees Scots Gloryhammer turn up the kitsch with another tale of wizards and battles for Scotland... only this time in space. Christopher Bowes knows how to pen an album of sing-a-long power metal which revels in every cliché the genre has to offer. Tracks like 'Goblin King Of The Dark Storm Galaxy' are the perfect sound track to festival drunkenness with its call to arms chorus and neat fretwork. Unlike the lacklustre Alestorm (oh whom Bowes is also a member), there is much more mileage in an act that combines humour with a sense of melody only the most po-faced could fail to appreciate.

[6] ROSS BAKER

## GOLDEN VOID

'Berkana'

THRILL JOCKEY



After Earthless', erm, earth-shaking performance at the 2008 edition of Roadburn, their guitarist Isaiah Mitchell started to spread his wings; first with Howlin' Rain and then with Golden Void, whom he assembled with Assemble Head In Sunburst Sound's keyboard player to encapsulate all his past experiences. Yet, unlike the intense acid-fuelled solo marathon of his main band, their second full-length is actually a way more laidback, slightly psychedelic exercise in mid-'70s classic rock, drawing as much from ZZ Top than from, say, The Grateful Dead. Even when they wander into the desert jamming, everything is kept on a tight leash ('I've Been Down') and you can't help but wish they'd let their hair down a bit more.

[6] OLIVIER 'ZOLTAR' BADIN





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# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

**"SNAPPING, SNARLING  
ANTI-SOCIAL NOISE"**



## EXTREME NOISE TERROR

**'Extreme Noise Terror'**

WILLOWTIP

**F**ucking hell, if you thought E.N.T. were ever going to mellow, you need to think again. Yes, quite a few years have passed since their last full-length, but their drive to create the most pissed-off hardcore punk ever appears to have dimmed not a jot. Having a band name like Extreme Noise Terror that doubles as a mission statement probably helps keep them focused as well, but fans will be pleased to know they've recaptured their gnarly crust-punk mojo, that seemed to drift away in favour of intense death metal for their Candlelight and Osmose releases. They're now back to doing what they do best: snapping snarling anti-social noise.

The uninitiated certainly won't be prepared for the staggeringly vicious attack of opener, 'Punk Control', which lulls you into a false sense of security with its cautious intro chords before smearing your face across the back wall of your skull with their usual gleeful abandon – and



the misanthropic tsunami continues unabated for the next twelve songs. Never dropping below absolute maximum velocity, and never easing off the violent intensity, this is E.N.T. at their best. An endurance test for many, but an explosive orgasm for lovers of uncompromising noise at the same time, with 'I Like Coca' meriting particular mention for the sheer bonkers-ness (so insane, it'll have you making up words to describe it, because normal words will ultimately fail you) of its vocal delivery, courtesy of both longstanding frontman Dean Jones and the new addition of Gorerotted/The Rotted's Ben McCrow. Welcome to the world of Extreme Noise Terror – if you don't belong, you won't be long.

[8] IAN GLASPER

## FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER

NEW VOCALIST BEN MCCROW ON JOINING ENT

**"I** was a big fan of ENT as a teen, long before I joined, specifically of 'A Holocaust In Your Head' and 'Phonophobia'. If I was going to compare this new album to anything the band's done before I'd say it sits nicely with those two. Catchy as fuck, aggressive ultra hardcore punk riffs, fast frantic drumming and mental vocals; I don't think Dean's ever sounded as insane as he does on this one! It's raw as

fuck too, no click tracks or fixing-in-the-mix type shit, instead the drums, bass and guitars were done live with the leads added after and me and Dean sharing a mic going through a 76 year old analogue valve amp. We're all hugely proud of this album, it's a proper call to arms and a brutal statement that the band's music and message is every bit as relevant today as when it was formed 30 years ago."

## JK FLESH 'Nothing Is Free'

SELF-RELEASE

**C**ompiling two years worth of material, 'Nothing Is Free' feels noticeably less cohesive than 'Posthuman', Justin Broadrick's debut under this name. Though not a true follow-up, 'Nothing...' isn't anything less than exhilarating, the rough-around-the-edges feel and dirtier sound to the electronics lending these tracks a gritty, paranoid atmosphere. The overall sound is much less riff driven than 'Posthuman' but no less abrasive, with the minimal techno and noise influences coming to the fore and resulting in punishing waves of feedback and dense, claustrophobic beats. It's available for donations on Justin's Bandcamp, so get on it!

[7] KEZ WHELAN

## KOWLOON WALLED CITY 'Grievances'

NEUROT

**W**hat's compelling and stunning about Kowloon Walled City is how the San Francisco-based quartet can ease their collective foot off the gas while leaving as much space between every note played and drum hit, but still manage such an air of wretchedness and despondency. The "four dudes playing to 40 dudes" have upped this head-scratching ante on their third album with the use of a tone that has seemingly halved the distortion you'd expect a band with a license on the tectonic and monolithic to be sporting. The result is a bristling, almost twangy feel to the apocalyptic sonic glass blowing of 'Grievances' seven tracks, given an additional sense of despair by Scott Evans' distinctive nasally bellow.

[8] KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

## GRIME 'Circle Of Molesters'

ARGENTO

**B**ack in 2013, Italy's Grime scored a home-run in sludge circles with 'Deteriorate', a snarling, misanthropic chunk of misery that certainly marked them out as ones to watch. Follow-up 'Circle Of Molesters' continues in a similar vein, but sees the quartet broadening their sonic palette somewhat. Don't worry, it still sounds like utter filth and all your favourite '90s sludge reference points are still all present and correct, but this time round there's a hint of Lord Mantis style uneasiness in there too. 'Decay In Hades', for example, sounds more like Today Is The Day assaulting Tom G. Warrior in a dark alley than it does another Grief clone. A fantastically uncomfortable listening experience.

[7] KEZ WHELAN

## HORNA 'Hengen Tulet'

W.T.C.

**M**ore vile, punkish backboneed blackness from everyone's favourite filthy Finns. Since Spellgoth joined on vocals, scaring live audiences with naked stage antics, Shatraug and co seem all the more lethal and this salvo of scummy Satanic songs illustrate them at their most hellacious. Tracks either batter away without any form of subtlety or are oozed out as sinister, stalking crypt-crawlers dedicated to the dark one. Horna are a band with no fucks given and represent the danger that black metal has largely forgotten. No 'post' fresh-as-a-daisy sounding correctness here; this is akin to wallowing in a pit of sewage and flinging it about with wild abandon.

[7] PETE WOODS

## HORISONT 'Odyssey'

RISE ABOVE

**O**ne could have expected that last year's addition of former Church Of Misery axeman Tom Sutton would have encouraged the (so far) rather discreet Horisont to get heavier but it actually had the opposite effect. Even if there are still a bunch of straight-up bluesy rockers to be found, the majority of this fourth full-length sees them dabbling in shameless vintage prog territory. But prog as in the early '70s sense of the word, like a more pompous version of UFO's first two proto-space rock albums with occasional bursts of Moog that truly blossom in the two ten minute long songs that open and close the album. If only they had cut the fat from this overlong and sometimes scattered 63 minutes long trip...

[6] OLIVIER 'ZOLTAR' BADIN

## IRON VOID 'Doomsday'

DOOMANOID

**H**ot on the heels of last year's self-titled debut, Yorkshire trio Iron Void's sound hasn't changed all that much – they still occupy that classic doom sweet spot somewhere between Trouble and The Obsessed – yet 'Doomsday' still manages to be a surprisingly diverse listen. Sure, the morose title track is as doom-laden as you'd expect, but on 'The Gates Of Hell' they sound more like a stoned Venom. Elsewhere, the anthemic 'The Answer Unknown' comes on strong like latter-day Orange Goblin with added Maiden-esque harmonies, whilst closer 'Upon The Mountain' veers closer to Sleep's hypnotic groove. The result is an extremely solid record that'll please lovers of classic heavy metal just as much as the doom fanatics.

[7] KEZ WHELAN

## GRAVE 'Out Of Respect For The Dead'

CENTURY MEDIA

**I**f you haven't been living under a rock for the past 27 years, it's likely that you'll know who Grave are. The Swedish titans are masters of the old school, up there with big names such as Dismember and Entombed, and are arguably one of the best death metal bands of all time. It seems that no matter how many line-up changes Grave undertake, that same chemistry that made 'Into The Grave' so great is ever present and their latest offering 'Out Of Respect For The Dead' is no different. The foreboding sense of putrefaction that is so engraved in the band's sound makes for an album that is an essential listen for any death metal fan. It's impossible to pick a stand-out song; 'Flesh Before My Eyes', 'Redeemed Through Hate'



and 'Grotesque Glory' are all fine examples of a craft that many imitate but only few can master. Modern bands take heed – this is how it's done.

[8] BETH AVISON





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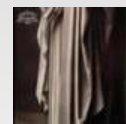
# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

**"EXCELLENTLY CRAFTED MELODIES CREEP THROUGH THE HORROR"**

## KRALlice

**'Ygg huur'**

AVANTGARDE



A diversion from the Krallice's earlier habit of producing marathon, labyrinthine tracks defined by their depth, 'Ygg huur's approach proves somewhat more direct - if the result is still as dense and ominously mysterious as a black hole. Similarly cosmic in nature is the outcome of Krallice's technicality here; whereas previously the band crafted hypnotically introspective atmosphere through jarringly dissonant melodies, with 'Ygg huur' these same elements produce an outward-reaching transcendence - and the band's dynamism somehow makes the most impervious of experimentation make sense in a way only Krallice can. An evolution in both Krallice's vitality and musicality, 'Ygg huur' is a cathartic, chaotic rush that will leave you breathless yet centred in its wake.

[7.5] RICH TAYLOR

## LEWIS AND THE STRANGE MAGICS

**'Velvet Skin'**

SOULSELLER



As the first full-length from the Spanish trio, 'Velvet Skin' borrows the stylistic elements from the psychedelia of the '60s/'70s, from Roky Erickson to The Doors and right through to modern interpretations such as Uncle Acid. However, the album has layered so many of these influences that at times it is hard to see what their end goal was. The record is at times a boiling pot of psychedelic licks, and the addition of swing beats and eerie organ are welcome, but the vocals do get on this scribe's nerves after prolonged exposure. The choice of album artwork also exemplifies the band's approach to their sound - it could do with maturing for a few years.

[5] IAN WILLIAMS

## LEGION OF ANDROMEDA

**'Iron Scorn'**

CRUCIAL BLAST



The band name might suggest twee progressive space rock, but not this duo: one man on drum machine/guitars and some inhuman bile-vomiting demon on "vokills" - in this case not so much whimsical as extremely fucking accurate - come together to make something as bleak as chipping out a suicide note on a tombstone. Calling themselves minimalist is an understatement - they have only two drum beats throughout the entire running time to go with their admittedly impressive array of sludgy riffs. Sure, Swans and Godflesh crush, but Swans can soar and Godflesh come up for air occasionally. No such respite exists on 'Iron Scorn', so you either treasure the monotony, or despise it.

[7.5] STEVE R. JONES

## LOMA PRIETA

**'Self Portrait'**

DEATHWISH



Loma Prieta stay faithful to the screamo sound on 'Self Portrait', but that doesn't mean this is a predictable or generic album. Loma Prieta (and screamo as a genre) thrive on unconventional song structures. 'Self Portrait' is full of jangly, indie-rock influenced guitar lines and almost poppy moments, wrapped in dissonance and aggression which would rival even the most vitriolic of hardcore bands. Deliberately unconventional albums can sometimes whizz by without having a single memorable moment, but Loma Prieta have no such issue here. Even though the album runs at a brief 30 minutes, songs like the almost anthemic 'Never Remember' and the overtly melodic 'Roadside Cross' provide accessible moments amongst the album's ever-shifting sound.

[8] TOM SAUNDERS



## KYLESA

**'Exhausting Fire'**

SEASON OF MIST

The huge refrain of "Don't look back!" from the alt. rock song of the same name off Kylesa's fantastic 2010 album, 'Spiral Shadow', seems to be the mission statement by which the acclaimed Georgian act have since based their songwriting on. For 2013's 'Ultraviolet', the wood-shreddin' duel drumming and red-hot sludge riffs of old were greatly suppressed by the full integration of post-punk, cold wave and '90s slacker rock/grunge influences, which led to a darker, more introspective and much less primal sound. Seventh album 'Exhausting Fire' builds upon that style; Kylesa have placed greater importance on the assembly of percussive, vocal and guitar-based textures, and, as is with post-punk, the bass and (double) drums - which are excellent throughout - anchor the instrumentation while the guitars frequently coat the accented rhythms instead of aggressively dominating the foreground. Kylesa get this paradigm right on the likes of



'Lost And Confused' and the blissed-out 'Moving Day'. But with the other lighter tracks, there's a definite lack of engagement, predominately because the vocals of guitarists Phillip Cope and Laura Pleasants are not strong enough to carry their chosen style - especially Cope's deathrock-inspired shout-talk (he even adopts a cringe-worthy English accent on 'Night Drive'). This may cause fans of Kylesa pre-'Ultraviolet' to struggle with 'Exhausting Fire'. Yet in saying that, the Melvins-Warpaint collision of opener 'Crusher', the measured doom of 'Inward Debate' and the psychedelic stoner rock of 'Shaping The Southern Sky' have enough heavyweight musicality to distract from some of the weaknesses found elsewhere.

[7] DEAN BROWN

## BETWEEN SILENCE AND SOUND

GUITARIST/VOCALIST LAURA PLEASANTS ON THE BAND'S NEWLY FOUNDED LABEL, RETRO FUTURIST

"This record label has definitely been a labour of love, a fun thing, but it does take up some time. It's not exactly raining money over here and we knew what we were getting into when we started a record label, but I think it's important. There's a lot going on in the underground.

It's easy for some of these bands to get picked up by a big label and the big label will just throw them out there into the big sea of a bazillion bands, but that's not always the best for a band. We're in a band, and we know what it's like to be in a band, on a label, so we try to provide a fair deal and a fair shake to the bands on our label."

## MALEVOLENT CREATION

**'Dead Man's Path'**

CENTURY MEDIA



It's been a good year for death metal's old guard with Krisiun, Nile and Hate Eternal, amongst others, offering keen works. Malevolent Creation have spoken of revitalization given the five years since 'Invidious Dominion' and the return of drummer Justin DiPinto, but they've also always occupied that 'take-em-or-leave-em' second-tier. 'Dead Man's Path' has its moments; the 'Reign In Blood'-ish sp(l)atter of 'Fragmental Sanity' and galvanic 'Soul Razer', but a lot of it also sounds like overextension. When they do the Slayer thing, it's awesome, but it's when they're trying to keep up with the speedier Jones, that the rails fall off. You can hear it in closer 'Face Your Fear' which contains elements of both, making it a cinch to tell which comes out on top.

[6.5] KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

## THE MEN THAT WILL NOT BE BLAMED FOR NOTHING

**'Not Your Typical Victorians'**

LEATHER APRON



In truth, these London "anachro-punks" aren't your typical anything[\$itals]. Drawing parallels between the Victorian era and our own age of austerity, they pump out off-kilter, steampunk-influenced noise with an arched eyebrow and plenty of cracking one-liners. This latest album is fiendishly entertaining, whether the four-piece are raging against London's crappy weather (nothing changes, eh?) or chimney sweep abuse. If you've ever hankered after a cross between raw, socially engaged fury, the songs from TV's 'Horrible Histories' - hey, they know how to pen a tune - and your weirdest post-cheese carnival nightmares, songs like 'The Worst Sideshow Ever' and 'This House Is Not Haunted' should be right up your foggy Whitechapel alley. It's a taste worth acquiring.

[7.5] ROB SAYCE

## HOODED MENACE

**'Darkness Drips Forth'**

RELAPSE

You know what, a Hooded Menace review is never really a fair business and we apologise to all the other bands reviewed all around this one in these pages. It's that guitar tone, man. We're convinced Lasse Pyykkö could record himself practising some scales with this guitar sound and we'd go apeshit for it anyway. It's like Autopsy were extradited to Sweden just before recording 'Mental Funeral', and whether it's Claws, Vacant Coffin or whatever other bands the man is in, they'll all be awesome. It also helps that in Hooded Menace Lasse writes some of the heaviest, most suffocatingly intense death/doom this side of the century, and on its fourth full-length, the formula is working better than ever. Allowing excellently crafted melodies to seep through the horror, the impact of the four



songs is even greater than on past favourites like 2010's 'Never Cross The Dead', and the rancid atmosphere captured throughout more than reflects the mood created by the magnificent Justin Bartlett artwork. What's not to like, right?

[8.5] JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS



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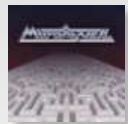


# SELECTED AND DISSECTED

"STRIKING LIKE A SMILING SERIAL KILLER"

## MIDDAY VEIL 'The Wilderness'

BEYOND BEYOND IS BEYOND



Loosely situated in the realms of psychedelia and space rock, two genres which often settle for cliché, Seattle's Midday Veil have established an impressively singular sound. Third LP 'The Wilderness' transforms the massed ranks of keyboards and Emily Pothast's folk-siren vocals from proggy brooding into corridors of cosmic disco glory. Of albums released in the last decade, Chrome Hoof's 'Pre-Emptive False Rapture' offers a faintly comparable reinvention, but Midday Veil's pop credentials are far more visible over these seven songs. There's (space) echoes of anyone from Giorgio Moroder to Portishead to Van De Graaf Generator to Vashti Bunyan herein, but you'll not really hear anything else like 'The Wilderness' this year, and certainly not reviewed in Terrorizer.

[8.5] NOEL GARDNER

## NIGHTFELL 'Darkness Evermore'

20 BUCK SPIN



Nightfell's attention-grabbing 'The Living Ever Mourn' had many ravenous for more from the auspicious Oregon based duo, yet few will have anticipated that the band would offer such a captivating follow-up as 'Darkness Evermore' just over a year since its release. Making good on the promise of their debut, Nightfell's second offering proves a razor-sharp, stylistically diverse conglomerate of melancholic melodies, tortured vocals and grave-dwelling morbidity that evades labelling as much as it fucking rips. Skilfully taking an element from the darkest roots of the extreme metal tree – eerie second wave atmosphere, funeral doom's sorrowful subtleties and the simmering fury that underpins sludge's cathartic tension, with 'Darkness Evermore' Nightfell offer another exhilarating yet dread-soaked step on the inventive sonic course they tread.

[8] RICH TAYLOR

## MORBID SLAUGHTER 'A Filthy Orgy Of Horror & Death'

BORIS

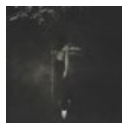


Morbid Slaughter call Lima, Peru home and were the first non-Atlanta-based band signed by Boris Records. With a name like Morbid Slaughter you would expect some malevolence and sadism, but '...Death' falls far short. This is marketed as "Filthy Dirty Blackened Speed!" It isn't. The production is purposefully lo-fi and the playing borders on sloppy. There is nothing wrong with that, sometimes youthful exuberance wins, but not here. The material fails to engage the listener on any meaningful level, and thus becomes tedious faster than you can say "Necrophiliac Sodomitizer", which is the guitarist's stage name. The song titles are humorously descriptive. If fact, the penultimate track, 'Torture Without Anesthesia', aptly describes this pointless effort.

[2] JOHN MINCEMOYER

## OF FEATHER & BONE 'Embrace The Wretched Flesh'

GOOD FIGHT



If harshness, bad vibes and cantankerous anger could be bottled and served up, well, let's just say we'd pay for rooftop view tickets of the post-imbibing fracas destined to echo throughout the puke-stained streets of Anytown, UK. For now, said elements have been corralled onto plastic, wax, digital code or however people experience music these days, in the form of Denver's Of Feather And Bone. Taking a page from bands like Cult Leader, Tragedy and Call Of The Void, OFAB lumber around the outskirts of sludge, grind, hardcore and doom whilst propelling themselves down raging rivers of fire, making strict use of peals discord and angst-ridden discomfort with the way of the modern world.

[7] KEVIN STEWART-PANKO

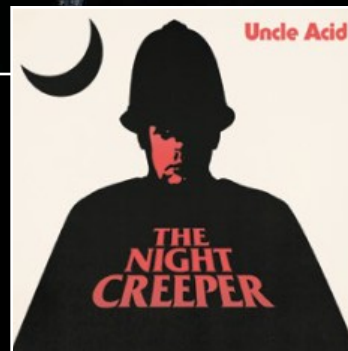


## UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS 'The Night Creeper'

RISE ABOVE

More retro than Uriah Heep's flares and as unsettling as an earthquake, the Cambridge doom-pop types' fourth outing serves to intensify the somewhat unique niche sound they've carved in the more gloomy scene. The logical conclusion of free loving '60s psych-pop exuberance and its comedown into the misanthropic, subversive sonic hauntings of occult metal, this band – having fittingly joined Sabbath on tour in recent years – could be visionaries if they weren't so steadfastly facing the past. Lysergic Beatles melodies are amped up, fuzzed out, kissed by death and pulled through a hemp hedge backwards to make the likes of earworm-of-the-year 'Melody Lane' a deliciously dark, compellingly weird proposition, while the almost childlike closing chants of 'Murder Nights' inversely utilise pop to create unease, striking like a smiling serial killer.

Sure, at times it's more repetitive than a parrot with amnesia, but if repetition is the



lifeblood of stoner music, The Deadbeats are suffering from chronic polycythaemia in places, cloning their riffs and stacking them high to create sonically and emotionally heavy walls. The mystical instrumental 'Yellow Moon' is an effective change of pace, while Kevin Starrs' vocals on the dreamy, embryonic journey of closer 'Slow Death' are so plaintively muted it's as though he's discussing a secret we're not worthy of knowing. And that's basically their ethos – 'The Night Creeper' is the sound of a band fearlessly hitting their stride while simultaneously, knowingly, stripping things back to black. Get ready for one of the best bad trips you've ever had.

[7.5] ANDY McDONALD

## HAND OF EVIL

UNCLE ACID HIMSELF, KEVIN STARRS, EXPLAINS THE ALBUM IN HIS OWN WORDS

"The idea is that this album could have started life as an old cheap, grime-covered 25 cent pulp paperback like the type sold at news-stands outside subway stations. But then perhaps it is adapted into a film noir, which itself is then re-made twenty years later as an ultraviolent, slasher Italian Giallo film.

The album follows this aesthetic lineage as it descends from trash to noir to something discernibly darker. [It] goes back to my original vision for the band, which was to take our love of girl groups – The Ronettes, The Shangri-La's, Phil Spector – and making it ultra-dark, lyrically. It's about balancing those sugar melodies with evil, insidious intent."

## PINKISH BLACK 'Bottom Of The Morning'

RELAPSE



A bit of a frying pan/fire situation for Texas duo Pinkish Black, as their third album sees them jump from Century Media to Relapse – neither of whom are obvious labels for their velvet-dark, gothic synth whirr. Granted, if Relapse can accommodate Zombi then 'Bottom Of The Morning' is fair game, as it touches on horror-flick homage territory at times (Fantômas' 'The Directors' Cut', in its more melodic moments, is another antecedent). You're equally liable to be reminded of King Crimson, Nine Inch Nails or early-'90s Nick Cave, mind you – the kind of auteurish names which suggest Pinkish Black could have a future as properly revered crowd-pullers and eclipse their inability to slot neatly into one genre.

[7] NOEL GARDNER

## QUEENSRYËCHE 'Condition Hüman'

CENTURY MEDIA



It was encouraging to see Queensrÿche return to their classic sound after hiring Todd LaTorre as the new singer, and goodness knows he belts out the old material in a way that Geoff Tate simply cannot do anymore. However, that energy did not translate on the resulting 2013 self-titled album much at all. The humorously titled 'Condition Hüman' is a mild improvement, as tracks like 'Arrow Of Time' and 'Hellfire' show signs of life. Sadly, with LaTorre's shameless aping of Tate's vocal phrasing and the songwriting's lazy reversion to slow tempos, it still only feels like a Queensrÿche facsimile. Sure, it's better than anything Tate does, but that can be said of any mediocre band.

[5] ADRIEN BEGRAND

## SVALBARD 'One Day All This Will End'

HOLY ROAR

You probably already know the name Svalbard if you've been paying attention to the UK's hardcore scene – the quartet have already put out three EPs, a split with Pariso and performed at both editions of Temples Festival – but if there's any justice, you'll be hearing a lot more about them in the coming months. Their debut full-length fulfils the promise displayed on those initial EPs and then some, marrying hard-hitting His Hero Is Gone style crust punk to glacial, melancholy swathes of tremolo that could have come straight from a Wolves In The Throne Room record. Not only has the band's songwriting and use of dynamics greatly improved from the EPs, there's an intensity and emotional honesty running through these eight songs that elevates them far beyond most of their contemporaries. Guitarist Serena's incredibly



passionate vocals and thought-provoking lyrics, which tackle everything from sexist attitudes to the glamorisation of depression in our musical world, add an extra-dimension to what is undoubtedly one of the finest hardcore records of the year.

[9] KEZ WHELAN



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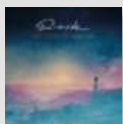
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## RIVERSIDE

### 'Love, Fear & The Time Machine'

INSIDEOUT



**P**redictably, the sixth album from Polish progsters Riverside asks for over an hour of your time, but unpredictably the longest song is a mere eight minutes. With the stormy 'Anno Domini High Definition' (2009) now fading away in their rearview mirror, the quartet have arrived at a surprisingly sunny destination with this unashamedly uplifting new music. If you're in need of an instant cheer-up, look no further than the dangerously poppy 'Under The Pillow' with its ultra catchy vocal hook, friendly guitar arpeggios and positively funky groove. Fans of the heavy, rest assured there's something for you too, like the bulldozing bridge in 'Discard Your Fear'. Any band brave enough to keep progressing like this deserves support!

[7] RAY HOLROYD

## SHINING

### 'International Blackjazz Society'

SPINEFARM



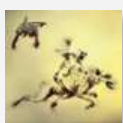
**W**here 'One One One' saw fifth album/debut metal album 'Blackjazz' stripped of its proggy tendencies and streamlined into accessible chunks of genre fusing batshitery, Shining's latest commits itself to both directions. Their attempts at straightforward songs represent a less predictable take on Nine Inch Nails floor fillers, arguably a bit beneath them but leagues beyond the rock club stomp-alongs they're warping. 'House Of Warship's manic instrumental jazz seizure then segues into the stunning, seven minute 'House Of Control', a slow building, cinematic ascent to a stadium worthy chorus. If Jørgen Munkeby's aiming to make his band one of the most outlandishly inventive to gain mass appeal, he's going about it the right way.

[7] BENJ GOLANSKI

## SADIST

### 'Hyaena'

SCARLET



**D**espite their poor attempt at jumping on the then nu-metal bandwagon with 'Lego' and the subsequent four year break, Sadist's reputation still stands today. And now with Pestilence pushing the daisies for good and Cynic off on a tangent, it's quite reassuring to know that in 2015 someone is still holding high the technical metal banner. Musically, their seventh full-length (and third since reforming) is more than ever full of finesse, mostly thanks to that typically Italian sense of drama of theirs expressed through their very progressive keyboard layers and techno-thrash riffing. But their latest vocalist – who has fronted the band since they reformed – Trevor's annoying barking style will remain a sour bone of contention.

[6.5] OLIVIER 'ZOLTAR' BADIN

## THE SPIRIT CABINET

### 'Hystero Epileptic Possessed'

VÁN



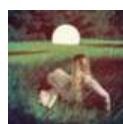
**A** union between members of Dutch heavyweights Cirith Gorgor, Urfaust and more, The Spirit Cabinet have emerged with an irrefutably experienced array of black metal musicians at their helm – yet their grim capabilities apparently do not transfer into traditional metal. The band's first outing 'Hystero Epileptic Possessed' splashes Candlemass-inspired grandiosity across a stripped-down heavy metal template, yet never manages to reach the peak that such a combination could. Completely fine but not especially memorable riffs fail to invoke the fiery passions that trad metal should, and in places the band's music seemingly becomes an after-thought written merely to provide vocalist Snake McRuffkin something to atonally warble over. Spook-factor abounds, but this is a haunting that you may wish to avoid.

[4] RICH TAYLOR

## SERIAL HAWK

### 'Searching for Light'

BLEEDING LIGHT



**W**hile not rewriting the book by any means, Serial Hawk's debut 'Searching For Light' manages to convincingly tread a path between the raw chord-hammering heaviness of so much modern doom, and a more dynamic, captivating approach to song-writing. Conan fans will find a belligerence redolent of Jon Davies in the vocals of Will Bassin, and comparisons to the UK cavemen may be found also in Serial Hawk's cavernous tension, notably as 'Lying In Wait' swaggers on like an angry mammoth. However the band prove truly adept at constructing towering atmospherics and a palpable sense of emotion that often passes less capable riff-merchants by – as the title track and its eighteen churning minutes powerfully attest.

[6] RICH TAYLOR

## STEVE MOORE

### 'Cub – Original Motion Picture Soundtrack'

RELAPSE



**C**onsidering the influence of classic horror soundtracks on Steve Moore and Zombi, it makes perfect sense that he's producing scores himself. Tipping his hat to the insistent, eerie minimalism of John Carpenter's 'Halloween' theme ('Intro & Credits') and Goblin's otherworldly keyboard progressions ('Arrival', 'The Treehouse'), Moore excels in this accompaniment to Belgian indie-slasher 'Cub'. For the most part it's sparse, repetitive and decidedly unsettling, opting for a slow-burn approach over the bombastic fare that so frequently blasts out of the multiplexes. Perhaps that means it's one for connoisseurs first and foremost – but fans of synth-based creepiness should find much to pick over and enjoy. You might want to listen after dark for maximal effect.

[7] ROB SAYCE

## STONE THE CROWZ

### 'Protest Songs 85-86'

OVERGROUND



**F**eaturing Trevor Speed and Matt Sheath, who went on to form the much-loved Axe grinder, on vocals and bass, and Steve Beatty, who would soon set up Endangered Musik and release the classic 'Out From The Void' EP by Antisept, on drums, Stone The Crowz were a quietly influential band at the tail-end of the UK anarcho punk heyday, so it's great to see them getting this long-overdue retrospective. Like so many of their peers, they were desperately well-intentioned, and youthfully naive, and they bashed out some fine noises in the vein of Exit-Strance, literally stomping their impassioned political indignation down the listener's throat with bruising rhythms and harsh guitars.

[7] IAN GLASPER

## STRATOVARIUS

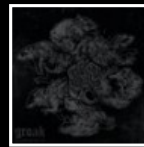
### 'Eternal'

EARMUSIC



**A** few albums in since some major line-up revolutions, but still a good year and a half off the expiry date placed on them by ex-guitarist Timo Tolkki, there's some substance in Euro pomp purveyors Stratovarius' latest. From the get-go it's all hyperactive guitar scales, dramatic flourishes and keyboard whirling. Cuts like 'Shine In The Dark' leave an impression, if only for its semblance of a metal version of Hot Butter's 'Popcorn'. Power metal is a subgenre often spoken about in hushed tones in extreme circles, but, as ever, the Finns are one to shout their epic message from the rooftops. It's travelled further in the past, but for the most part it still rings clear.

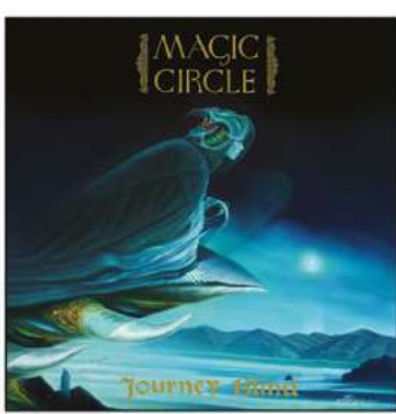
[6] ANDY McDONALD



**N**O MELODIES, NO GROOVES, NO SLAMS, NO BREAK DOWNS. We could just leave this whole column right there, as a sort of life motto, but this bit of page won't fill itself otherwise. Anyway, that's what's written on the inlay of **Trench Warfare's** first demo 'Perversion Warfare' [8, self-released], and in case you still had doubts about the Midland, Texas trio's intentions, they add ONLY HATRED AND WAR followed by too many exclamation marks to accurately reproduce, plus a thank you to the Ross Bay Cult too. Musically, all those promises are delivered – it's eight minutes of remorseless, emotionless (a feeling, or lack thereof, further reinforced by the mechanical coldness of a drum machine too) war metal that's so crushing we pretended it's an EP just to fit it here. Just like Acid Reign's new digital single 'Plan Of The Damned' [7.5, self-released], because it's fucking **Acid Reign**. Sure, it's only Howard left from the old line-up, and it's only one song, but in case you skipped the previous sentence, it's fucking Acid Reign. Despite all the "but"s you want to throw at it, it's their first single in 25 years and it's as close to thrashy brilliance as anything they've ever done. Also in the category of "it's fucking x" where x is a name that justifies the entire review, **The Wolves Of Avalon** manage to cram in all of two songs (9:14 minutes) four guests you might have heard of before – Mantas (Venom), Rob Miller (Amebix/Tau Cross), Mirai (Sigh) and Alan Averill (Primordial). That alone warrants the immediate purchase of the 7" [8, **Eternal Death**], and the fact that the side A is a cover of Venom's 'Die Hard' and side B a reprise of 'Carrian Crows Over Camlan' from the Wolves' first album with the same name seals the deal for anyone with two ears and metal in their veins. If you only have regular person blood, then it's okay (well, sort of), **Between Waves** provide mellow, reasonable atmospheric rock with the occasionally meaty riff thrown around Helen Page's vocals on their new EP 'Paper Chains' [6.5, self-released]. Both the song writing and especially the production need tightening and an overall boost, but they show guts for trying to avoid the easy verse-chorus-verse approach they could have gone for, and the best songs like 'Place To Fall' have a lot of promise. Hailing from Hungary, **Don Gatto** could learn a thing or two about adventurous song writing. Their chunky "chainsaw hardcore" is thrown down with confidence on new EP 'Sawbotage!' [5.5, self-released], and you might even find yourself singing along on the very first listen, but only because you've heard it all before a million times. Come on guys, we like Merauder too, but geez. We might have also heard the malignant noise put forth by Leeds' **Groak** on their 'Masticator' EP [7.5, self-released], but if we did, it was such a traumatic experience that we probably threw it into the back of our subconscious. Filthy, life-destroying sludge doom that accelerates occasionally, and apparently (hopefully!) randomly into short crusty explosions, it's the sort of thing that'll make you throw bottles at your computer if you have the unfortunate idea to play the stuff on their Bandcamp. Finally, there's a new split between **Hellripper** and **Batsheva** [7.5, Label 2318] which you should acquire immediately. While Aberdeen and Philadelphia might not seem like the closest of places, the way the former's grimy ugh!-ridden black'n'roll and the latter's raw and shrieked yet atmospheric kind of black metal complement each other make us feel like they should be sister cities.

WORDS: JOSÉ CARLOS SANTOS





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### CAGE - OCTOBER 30

Known as "The American Power Metal Kings," CAGE has earned that moniker over two decades, by releasing one award winning album after another. Now, they're getting ready to release their 7th album overall, and their most ambitious album yet - a horror-concept called **ANCIENT EVIL**.



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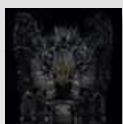
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# OVERKILL 'HISTORIKILL: 1995 - 2007' NUCLEAR BLAST

## TEMPLE OF BAAL 'Mysterium'

AGONIA



**H**aving been around for over fifteen years, it's safe to say that French blackened death mob Temple Of Baal are well-respected.

They have released material in a steady stream throughout that time, their latest opus being 'Mysterium'. Even though the production is modern, there's still a dirty old-school death metal vibe that really resonates. The squealing solo on 'Magna Gloria Tua' harkens back to Autopsy et al and the guitar work in 'Divine Scythe' sounds like it was ripped straight from the early '90s; no wonder this track got picked as 'Mysterium's' first single. This is seamlessly tied in with a depraved black metal sound and the result is an album that is an unmissable listen.

[8] BETH AVISON

## VI 'De Praestigiis Angelorum'

AGONIA



**T**his is best described as 'dragged through a hedge backwards' black metal – something the French do so well, adding complete

chaos to their craft. Unsurprising that this is an exercise in utter madness as this unholy trio contain members of Asoth, Merrimack and ex-Antaeus in their ranks and is stewed to the gills with algebraic guitar riffs, which never stand still for a second. Luckily the sums, in their seething mass, are not hard to fathom and although it's convoluted, it's highly melodic too. A midpoint passage of grim ambience is the one respite breaking up the 'scourge of locusts' guitar attack and snarling vocals but the overall effect here is one leaving you completely giddy.

[8] PETE WOODS



**T**o celebrate signing to Nuclear Blast, Overkill have released eleven of their mid-period albums in this immense fourteen-disc box set. The band have always been one of the most impressively prolific – and more importantly – consistent of all the original thrash bands (don't forget they had already released seven albums prior to the period covered by this collection!) and this serves as an ideal reminder of just how lethal their no-nonsense 'blue collar metal' really is.

1995's double live album, 'Wrecking Your Neck', gathers all the best moments from those first albums, and, as you'd expect from a band with a touring ethic like Overkill, is as solid a live performance as you'll ever hear, and blessed with a suitably immense sound, D.D.'s

bass like an enormous weight bearing down on the back of your neck.

The aptly-titled 'Battle' opens 1996's 'The Killing Kind', with songs like 'Let Me Shut That For You' and 'Bold Face Pagan Stomp' epitomising the aggressive attitude this band always bring to the party, whilst 1997's 'From The Underground And Below' was the band's first offering for Steamhammer and a particularly heavy one at, with the crushing 'I'm Alright' an undeniable highlight amidst the carnage.

The title track of 1999's 'Necroschism' pretty much sums up the band's approach: huge sledgehammer riffs, precise violent rhythms, and Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth's instantly recognisable but very quirky shrieking vocals. 'Coverkill' was released the same year, and sees the band paying homage to their influences, a good mixture of classic metal and vintage punk rock – although their take on Jethro Tull's 'Hymn 43' owes more to the Sheer Terror version than the Tull original!

'Bloodletting' was their last release with Steamhammer, but a mighty fine way to bid farewell, and yet more wall-to-wall riffing to grind your teeth to. Like many of these mid-period offerings, it was produced by the band themselves, and they teased some unbelievably thick tones out of the mix.

When Overkill signed to Spitfire in 2002, their introductory releases for the new label were the double-album 'best of', 'Hello From The Gutter' (24 tracks of muscular slash and burn), and a killer live set recorded in Asbury Park, New Jersey, 'Wrecking Everything', that was also released as a DVD at the time and includes classic after classic from their '80s albums like 'Evil Never Dies' and 'Shred'.

The band were obviously on a roll, as they followed through with 'Killbox 13', a great return to form, and absolutely bristling with nasty riffs and D.D.'s inimitable clanking bass. 2005's 'RelixIV' was not quite on the money by Overkill's standards though, full of the obligatory guitar chunks but lacking some of those all important hooks that we've come to expect from the band. They were well and truly back on form for 'Immortals', the final reissue album of the box, originally released in 2007 on Bodog and veritably spitting piss 'n' vinegar.

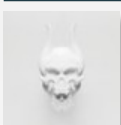
So, onto the bonus disc, which is one for completists only really, mainly comprising demo and remixed versions – although we do get an unreleased cover of Johnny Cash's 'Man In Black', which might have some novelty appeal if you're a Cash fan, but being primarily acoustic doesn't rattle your teeth the way it ought.

Yes, this box is a huge amount of metal to digest in one go, and inevitably there are one or two albums that don't quite excite now as much as they used to, but even a slightly less than essential Overkill record stomps all over most of the best offerings from their peers, so stop complaining and Feel The Fire.

[7.5] IAN GLASPER

## TRIVIUM 'Silence In The Snow'

ROADRUNNER



**A**rguably, the best thing Trivium ever did was work with Disturbed head honcho David Draiman.

Until then the band had been adrift, trying hard to find its own voice after early success, and it had gotten to the point where the band sounded muddled, the music stripped of any vitality. 2013's 'Vengeance Falls' saw the band and Draiman simplify, and the follow-up does exactly the same thing. The dynamic balance between heaviness and melody is as strong as Trivium's ever pulled off, and Matt Heafy's singing has never sounded more confident, nor more powerful. Seven albums in this band's finally found its niche, and they're on one hell of a roll. Don't sleep on this record.

[7] ADRIEN BEGRAND

## W.A.S.P. 'Golgotha'

NAPALM



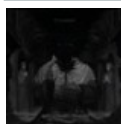
**'G**olgotha', W.A.S.P.'s fifteenth studio album was conceived in 2011. You can read about the myriad delays on the WASP Nation

website where you will learn 'Miss You' was originally written for 'The Crimson Idol'. Guitarist Doug Blair's beautifully emotive, fluid solo work on 'Miss You' defies description, and provides one of 'Golgotha's' rare high points. On the title track, Blackie Lawless implores, 'Jesus, I need you now...' [Italics on lyrics], which is a far cry from 'Animal (Fuck Like A Beast)', 'Wild Child' and 'Kill Fuck Die'. Lawless, once again intensely personal especially regarding his Christian beliefs, might have found personal catharsis in 'Golgotha's' creation and completion, but, sadly, that does not make it truly electrifying or exceptional.

[5] JOHN MINCEMOYER

## TYRANNY 'Aeons In Tectonic Interment'

DARK DESCENT



**W**ith a decade long gap between releases these Finnish funeral doomsters obviously work at the same

speed they play. Moving at a snail's pace but weighty enough to smash said mollusc's carapace from a great distance, these five hefty sermons ooze out, leaving a slimy trail in their wake. Unnaturally low, weathered vocals and a dread atmosphere perpetuate this stygian enclave and the players exude a sense of dark magic, summoning eerie acolytes to worship at a deconsecrated cathedral filled easily by its ghostly call. Making it all sound as old as time itself, they may not be adding anything particularly new to the genre but as tyrannical overlords, their place within its monastery is guaranteed.

[7] PETE WOODS

## WEDERGANGER 'Halfvergaan Ontwaakt'

VAN



**I**n a world saturated with below-par black metal, the experience of coming across a band that truly invoke that sense of supernatural mystique and darkness is

becoming increasingly rare. Listening to the debut of Dutch newcomers Wederganger is one such uncommon experience, with 'Halfvergaan Ontwaakt' incorporating a range of ideas into its mid-paced, primitive black metal sound to spectral and hypnotic results. Clean vocals that sound like Christopher Lee's Dracula accompany slow-waltzing, distorted melodies, giving compositions such as 'Dondendans' an almost operatic atmosphere, and wreathing Wederganger's ferocious passages of traditional BM with a lavishly grandiose gloom. Both envisioned and delivered with eerie intent, 'Halfvergaan Ontwaakt' is just the richly ominous séance 2015 needs.

[7] RICH TAYLOR

## WORKIN' MAN NOISE UNIT 'Play Loud'

RIOT SEASON



**M**ost of the British bands who might qualify as Workin' Man Noise Unit's

peers – that is, anyone feedback-ridden, absurdist and DIY in their approach – presumably operate in spite of the grotty venues, malfunctioning gear and minimal pay. These Reading-based fellows embrace all that to the extent that it seems like their raison d'être. Pithily-titled debut album 'Play Loud' makes a good case for warm Fosters, loosened earwax and dorky in-jokes, via nine thick rashes of overdriven stoner-meets-noise-rock with superfuzzed guitar solos and hollered vocals. Part Chimp are pretty clear prototypes for WMNU, but the legacy of these amp-stacked blowouts goes back at least as far as Blue Cheer's mighty 'Vincebus Eruptum' LP.

[7] NOEL GARDNER

## ZOMBI 'Shape Shift'

RELAPE



**A**fter a slew of solo and touring work, Zombi return with a new studio album that finds them back

on the straight and narrow. Utilising their 'Surface To Air' album as their starting point, messers Moore and Paterra have forsaken the techno jams and progressive house, instead working to their strengths as a functioning live duo. For whatever reason, playing live in the studio has brought the duo back towards a sound that is equally darkly mysterious as it is tinged with foreboding. While the melodies and arrangements could easily have fallen from any rosey '70s or '80s low-budget VHS effort, Zombi make a fine job of conveying the fear of the celluloid image through their music.

[8] GUY STRACHAN



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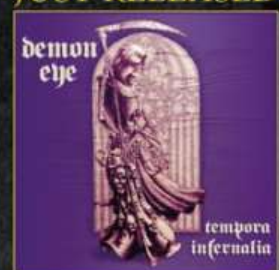
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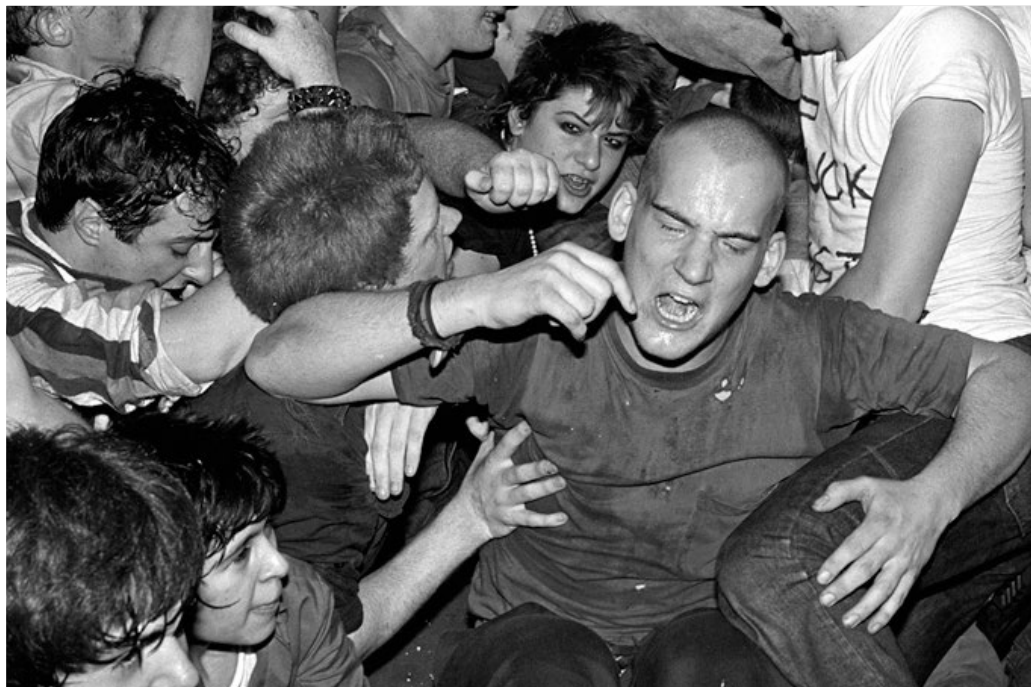
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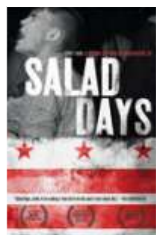
## DVD



## SALAD DAYS:

A DECADE OF PUNK IN WASHINGTON (1980 - 1990)  
Scott Crawford & Jim Saah

MVD



"It's a Petri dish of great ideas," claims Minor Threat's Ian MacKaye of Washington DC at the beginning of this fascinating, often uplifting, music doc, whilst someone else suggests that, "Isolation breeds individuality..." Either way, there's no denying that Washington DC in the 1980s proved to be an incredibly creative environment musically, everyone inspiring everyone else to spawn some of the most incendiary punk and hardcore music to ever come out of the States – despite government being the main business there!

Yes, it's a similar story to many other scene(or city)-centric documentaries, and there are many comparisons to be made with the UK in the way that punk empowered individuals with its DIY ethos, but this comes replete with a killer soundtrack and some truly amazing live footage – not to mention countless archive images – of bands like Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Void, Beefeater, Dag Nasty, SOA and Scream.

Via too many talking heads to even start to list, the film insightfully tells of the many ups and downs of the DC scene, the overarching influence of Dischord, the 'Revolution Summer' of 1985 and the rise of political awareness, SXE ("Our consumption of music had nothing to do with the consumption of alcohol!") and emo ("Surely punk was emotional from Day One?"). It's well shot and paced and leaves the viewer desperate to go out and rediscover some of these amazing bands all over again.

But the last word should surely go to the ever-perceptive Ian MacKaye who, when asked whether Dischord was exclusionary and stifled other non-Dischord bands from DC, replies, "I never wanted to own the scene here – I just wanted there to be a scene!" And this is the perfect document of what he helped create.

[8] IAN GLASPER

## BOOK

## BLACK METAL: THE CULT NEVER DIES VOLUME ONE Dayal Paterson

CULT NEVER DIES



It's always pleasing to get a new book written about one of extreme metal's most important and controversial genres, so 'The Cult' is a welcome addition to the bookshelf. For the curious and the diehards, the content of this book is written deep enough to satisfy both parties thankfully, with no major glaring errors in facts or approach, which validates the book's authoritative tone. As well as sections on Norway, Satyricon and the Moonfog days, there are also substantial chapters on Polish black metal (including Arkona and Mglá) chapters on depressive black metal (Bethlehem, Silencer etc) and the fact that Dayal has called this book Volume One suggests in the not too distant future, there will be plenty more gems unearthed for everyone's reading pleasures.

[8] DARREN J. SADLER

## DVD

## THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION COLLECTION

SECOND SIGHT FILMS



Ask any metal fan over 40 about this series of films and you're pretty guaranteed to enjoy a vignette about the sequence when former W.A.S.P. axeman Chris Holmes was sprawled on a lilo in an LA pool, drunk and downing vodka like it was mineral water. It's such a classic moment in heavy metal history that captured the excess of the scene back in the '80s. This box set features all three films in the series, from exploring the LA punk rock scene of the early '80s (Black Flag, The Germs and so on) through to the glam rock era of the mid '80s and then finally the post-glam comedown that followed. As a documentary, it's a fantastic and entertaining insight into a world that we all know and love, created before social media invaded everyone's world and music felt, arguably, more special. A fantastic viewing experience.

[8] DARREN J. SADLER



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# STAGEFRIGHT

EDITED BY KEZ WHELAN

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## BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL

CATTON PARK, DERBY

### FRIDAY

Veteran New York thrashers **Nuclear Assault** open up the Ronnie James Dio Stage in fine form – a great but rather surreal start to the day given the 11AM set time. Sludge metal bruisers **Raging Speedhorn** deliver a typically energetic performance with co-vocalists Frank Regan and John Loughlin clearly loving the opportunity to run riot on the big stage, delivering the shot of adrenaline needed to spur the crowd out of their lunch time slump.

Over on the Sophie Lancaster Stage, **Bast** hold a sizeable crowd in the palms of their hands, as their evocative, mercilessly heavy fusion of doom and black metal shrouds the whole tent in a thick, eerie atmosphere, evidently winning them

several new fans in the process.

Back on the Dio Stage, **Armored Saint**'s brand of brash, ballsy metal gets the crowd pumped right up. John Bush rallies the troops, taking the old guard right back to '84 with 'March Of The Saint' as he paces around the monitors. As for fan-favourite 'Can U Deliver', well, it's pretty obvious they just did. By total contrast, **Belphegor** drape the stage in bones and summon the dead to rise and feast. Blastbeats rain down, bells toll and gravid rasps conjure up an unholy atmosphere. Having built to a climatic 'Bondage Goat Zombie', the gates of hell slam firmly shut again.

The curse of airport travel has hit **Enslaved** this year, with the Norwegians' instruments failing to be delivered to the

UK on time. Yet even such difficulties cannot prevent Bergen's best from delivering an epic set of progressive black metal. A run through grim classic 'Alfablot' signs off a spectacular performance, made even more special after enduring such adversity. Plagued by technical issues, **Ihsahn** apologises for the stop-start nature of today's performance but nothing can spoil a set that is steeped in sweeping progressive melodies and titanic black metal, even indulging us with snippets of Emperor classic 'Thus Spake The Nightspirit'.

The second classic thrash band of the day from the (rotten to the core) big apple is **Overkill**, and Bobby Blitz and crew instantly

whip the enthusiastic crowd into a frenzy with 'Armourist' and 'Hammerhead'. The sound is powerful, the trademark rumbling bass of D.D. Verni cutting perfectly through the crunching guitars.

Drawing one of the biggest crowds the Sophie Stage has seen all day, **Conan** are genuinely crushing – and by "crushing" we don't just mean "they play several loud riffs", but rather "there's a mounting concern for the structural integrity of our spinal columns". The new lineup has hit the ground running, and the crowd respond in kind by losing their minds. As does the modest but rabid crowd assembled for **Hexis**' sparse, abrasive and black metal influenced hardcore on the New Blood Stage.

Heading back to the Dio Stage, and **Sabaton** have only gone and brought a bloody great tank on stage with them. It all seems somewhat wrong though; war is grim and no matter how well researched these things are, clap happy songs like 'Panzerkampf', laden with cheese and pyro explosions, strike as lacking in decorum. Needless to say, the audience generally don't give a flying one and turn the whole thing into a great big party anyway.

**Trivium** may have outgrown their naïve metalcore beginnings but they struggle to justify their billing as headliners. Save for the impressive fretboard heroics on 'Becoming The Dragon' and calling card 'Pull Harder On The Strings Of Your Martyr', Trivium have neither the charisma nor the hits required to cement themselves as a suitable replacement for the aging vanguard of metal festival headline acts.

### SATURDAY

Manchester's **Pist** are the perfect band to open the Sophie Stage today, their sleazy stoner grooves inspiring a hungover crowd to start a circle pit before midday. Bravo lads!

Further gremlins appear in the Dio Stage's sound system, meaning **Xerath** are forced to leave the Dio stage while the

SABATON

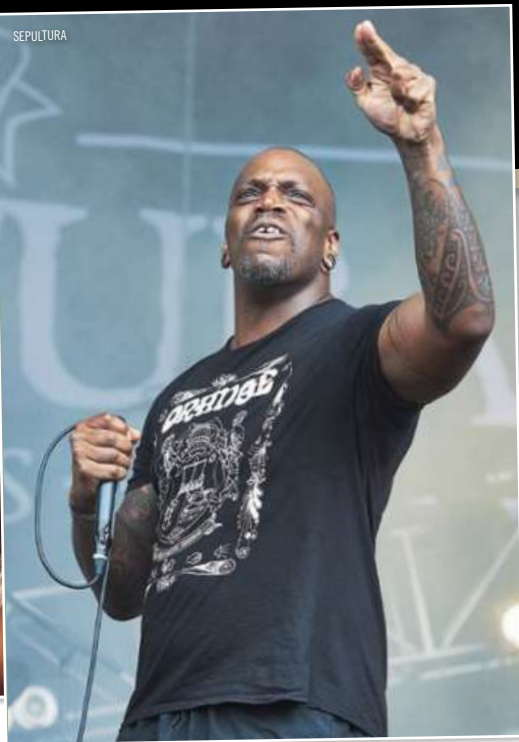


DEATH



OVERKILL





problems are ironed out, though the symphonic troupe still deliver a decent set nonetheless. Norwegian black metallers **1349** bring some cold, icy grimness on this blazing sunny day, looking rather out of place in such weather. Regardless, they bulldoze their way through a frenetic set. Elsewhere, Hull sludge collective **Mastiff** absolutely level the New Blood Stage with one of the most cathartic performances of the entire festival. Keep an eye on these guys!

Renowned for inciting raucous dancing and partying, **Korpiklaani** are a huge anti-climax, largely due to the omission of their alcohol fuelled hits, save the token addition of 'Vodka'. Perhaps it is due to the Finns wish to shake off their 'party band' image but the crowd wasn't buying it. **Napalm Death** steamroll through their set, playing some of their songs even faster than the album versions ('Suffer The Children' especially). A set packed with intelligence and brutality. Recently reformed LA thrash legends **Dark Angel** then make their much anticipated live return to these shores, brimming with energy as Gene Hoglan leads the charge from behind the kit. Ron Rinehart is on fine form vocally and clearly very happy to be there, leaving Bloodstock with a setlist that no die hard Dark Angel could argue with. Pulling off double drum duty, Gene Hoglan returns as part of the **Death** lineup. Playing classics off every album with obvious passion and energy, it's a very fitting and heartfelt tribute to Chuck Schuldiner. Frontman Max Phelps bears an uncanny resemblance to the late great death metal pioneer in every way, making this is the next best thing to seeing a Chuck fronted Death.

Are **Opeth** going to harvest their heritage or prog us to death? Well, it's a bit of both as Mikael Åkerfeldt teases with a couple off the band's 'least favourite albums' and then drops 'The Drapery Falls', reinstalling the growls and heavier progressive flair that we know and love. **Within Temptation** bring massive theatricality and play like true headliners, belting out tracks from latest album 'Hydra'. Technical issues may send everything FUBAR as they try and unleash 'The Ice Queen' but Sharon den Adel can but professionally shrug it off, sip some wine and blow us away with storming finale 'Mother Earth'.

For those in search of something more brutal, **Fleshgod Apocalypse** are outstanding. Drummer Francesco Paoli is a beast, accenting the searing riffs with surgical precision,



whilst Veronica Bordacchini's operatic vocals add a majesty to titanic overtures like 'Epilogue' and 'The Violation'. The Italian outfit are in total command from start to finish.

## SUNDAY

Providing a lush and hypnotic wake-up call, **Agalloch's** glistening fretwork may turn us into a field of grass-gazers but with spiralling guitars building into a head-exploding crescendo, the bleak moods prove ultimately weighty too.

**Wolf** pack a punch with all four band members joining in vocally, twin axe attacks and a thick bass groove. They even plug their own pale ale and play some rollicking Swedish heavy metal, getting the crowd singing "from their balls"!

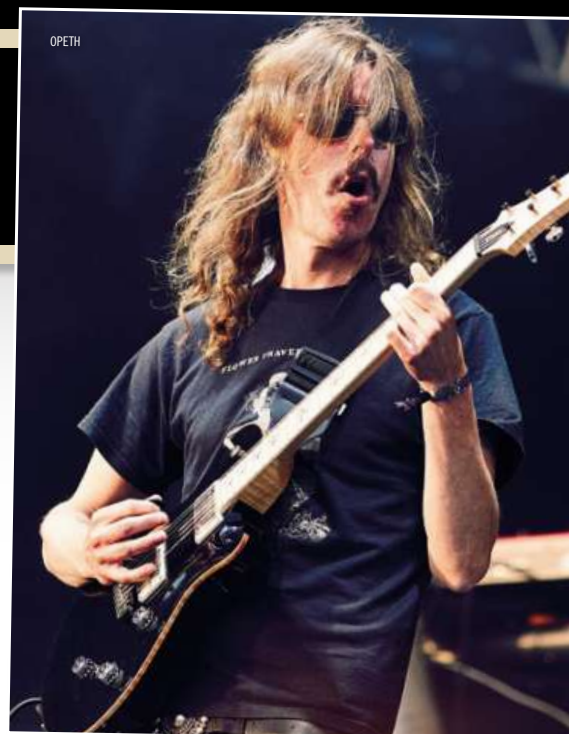
Greeted by a sea of beers held high, **Orange Goblin** hit the ground running. The culmination of twenty odd years of toiling around every venue that would have them has seen Ben Ward and company emerge as the towering giant of heavy metal they have always threatened to become. **Pro Pain** don't do anything flashy but their gritty New York hardcore has an energy about it that has yet to be tempered with age.

Am I Evil? Not anymore! **O! Drake** is now just a guitarist with a flying V and delighted to be here with two green monster things playing air rake behind him. He may apologise for on-stage wankery and hating 'Onions' but at least he has plenty of chops to go with them.

**Sepultura** bring their 30th anniversary celebration setlist to Bloodstock, opening up with 'Troops Of Doom'. The band are on form and powerhouse frontman Derrick Green commands the crowd from the offset, leading the Seps through a set which seemed over with all too soon. Finish battle metal act **Ensiferum** provide a bit of light relief with danceable, inoffensive offerings - 'Two Of Spades' even sees the band joined by dancers who hurl beach balls into the audience.

On the New Blood Stage, Derby tech-metal crew **Taken By The Tide** get the whole tent bouncing around like lunatics. On the Sophie Stage, party thrash dudes **Lawnmower Deth** throw everything at us including a bit of music. You may forget that with all the theatrics going on, but their poverty row GWAR on an Ed Wood budget performance naturally goes down brilliantly.

Clearly one of the most anticipated bands of the day, **Cannibal Corpse** bludgeon the crowd with musical hammer-blows from throughout their lengthy career, leaving a very bloodied mark on the day's proceedings. **Black Label Society** struggle to follow that; whilst the band's whiskey swiggin'



anthems go down well with the crowd, Zakk Wylde's insistence on wanton fretboard masturbation puts a real downer on the mood.

Despite an overpowering kick-drum sound, **Onslaught** play a very solid set of newer and classic songs on the Sophie Stage, from staples such as 'Metal Forces' and closer 'Power From Hell' mixing well alongside latter tracks such as 'Killing Peace' and 'Destroyer Of Worlds'.

There's no pyro for **Rob Zombie** tonight but this rock 'n' roll freak show doesn't disappoint. Sure, Zombie sounds out of breath running around the stage like his life depended on it but great vocal prowess was never how he made his name. Stomping numbers like 'Living Dead Girl' and an impromptu rendition of James Brown's 'Get Up (I Feel Like Being Like A) Sex Machine' get the party rolling before industrial stomper 'Dracula' sees a triumphant close to a set chock full of hits. Like his hero Alice Cooper, Zombie has long forgone any desire to shock or cause controversy. This is a celebration of b-movie schlock in all its distasteful, decadent glory.

Saving the best for last, however, the mighty **Godflesh** provide the heaviest set of the weekend by a country mile, as the punishing thud of their drum machine and G.C. Green's cavernous bass threatens to burst the ribcages of those in the front row. Opening with several new tunes before delving right back to their first three albums, songs like 'Spite' and the devastating 'Christbait Rising' envelope the tent like aural black holes, a soul-wrenchingly intense reminder of just how fucking great this band is.

Words: **Ross Baker, Kat Gillham, Kez Whelan, Pete Woods**  
Pics: **Leigh van der Byl, Marie Korner**



NAPALM DEATH



BROKEN HOPE



## OBSCENE EXTREME AMERICA

MONTRÉAL TELUS THEATER



FUCK THE FACTS

like 'Metal Slaughter', 'Frozen Aggressor' and 'Beware The Scarecrow'. Two original members are these days propped up by two young guns who definitely spend their spare time lamenting not being around during thrash metal's heyday, but it isn't a trainwreck and sometimes that's all you can ask for with these part-time reunions.

For a band that only features two members playing guitar, drums and vocals – though we swear we've seen them as a trio somewhere before – Texas' **P.L.F.** (or Pretty Little Flower) make a thick racket and despite Dave Callier being glued to the mic stand, the razor sharp execution and interplay makes their set much more captivating than expected. On the heels of the complex depth of their new album and lineup shuffle, **Fuck The Facts** appear noticeably uneasy at certain points. They aren't helped by the fact the stage alone is the size of some of the venues they're used to playing. Still, the grinding zig-zag of the new 'Desire Will Rot' material catches wind and sails into an overall enjoyable set. Wish we could say the same about **Putrid Pile**, the one-man death metal machine headed up by Shaun LaCanne. Musically, it's a serviceable enough addition to the brutal death metal corpse pile, but as Lacanne doesn't include any additional visual elements or much of a stage presence to his performance, a Putrid Pile set is essentially watching a guy playing guitar in a dark room.

You could confuse the snap of the snare drum and artificial harmonics during **Morpheus Descends'** set for bones creaking and artificial hips squealing. The older-than-old-school NY death metal dudes dig their heels in for a salute to the glory days of mid-tempo riffs and when every band worth its salt had '-tion' in its name. Their fill-in vocalist seems to be having the time of his life and why not? If it weren't for the fact the calendar on the wall says 2015 and everyone has grey in their beards, Morpheus Descends might as well have schlepped a time machine onto the premises.

In a live environment, Czech Republic's **Jig-Ai**, thankfully, come across less on the gurgling porno grind tip than their records. Their material seems quirkier in the flesh; more Cephalic Carnage than Cock And Ball Torture. When not glued to the microphone, guitarist Brain takes it upon himself to lap circles around the big stage, punctuating his twisted facial expressions with split-leg leaps that'd rival Lou Koller and vintage David Lee Roth for height and form.

Considering this is their first show ever, the near-the-top

**A** couple years back, as a means of saluting the fifteenth birthday of the Obscene Extreme Festival, curator and promoter Miroslav "Curby" Urbanec decided he didn't already have enough on his plate. Instead of soaking up the celebration at the fest's usual stomping grounds at the Trutnov Battlefield in the Czech Republic, Curby organized roadshow versions of OEF in Asia, Australia and North America with varying success. This year sees the "American" version of his freak-friendly fest being held in various venues around downtown Montréal, arguably ground zero for extreme music culture and fan support on this side of the puddle.

### FRIDAY

As Terrorizer has a life outside of terrorizing, we didn't actually make it into the construction-clogged streets of the Île-de-Montreal until early on during the second day of the fest. But, we must pat ourselves on the rump for immaculate timing as we stroll into the cavernous underground of the Telus Theater just as screeches of noise and goofy hardcore jumps introduce Winnipeg's heirs to the mincore throne,

**Archagathus**. Whilst watching the trio tear it up with bursts of bottom-heavy noisecore that border equally on the comedic as it does the brutal, two questions echo throughout the venue: 1) What makes this "mincore" as opposed to grindcore?; and 2) considering the near-thousand capacity and thirty-plus foot high ceilings of its underground location, what was this place previously used for? Neither question is satisfactorily answered, though the former elicits a "they kinda sound like **Agathocles**" or two.

Speaking of the Belgian beer-and-grind masters, there may be no sign of any of their eight million recorded releases – give or take a million – at the merch table, but the trio are in fine form, cranking out what felt like a couple hundred songs of full throttle harsh but grooving grind in about an hour. Interspersed were surprisingly humorous bits of between-song banter on the topics of social justice, taxes and, of course, beer. We wouldn't say their first time on Canadian soil was a transformative experience, but it was fun and a prime example of seasoned veterans at work. On the topic of seasoned veterans, local thrashers **Aggression** come barreling straight outta 1987 playing small-c classics

Words: **Kevin Stewart-Panko** Pics: **Mihaela Petrescu**





billing of **Gruesome**, described by vocalist/guitarist Matt Harvey himself as “a little bit influenced by a band called Death,” is surprising. Still, no one seems to mind as the tribute-but-not-covers quartet double down on the screaming bloody riffs and whammy bar wailing in delivering the tunes from their ‘Savage Land’ album. There are a couple moments of confused sidelong glances, but that’s to be expected and none of it stops Harvey from playing up his role as the consummate, down-to-earth heavy metal frontman. Gruesome should be a force to behold with a string of consistent dates under their belts.

## SATURDAY

One major difference between the Czech Obscene Extreme and this version is that drunkenly stumbling across a field to



TRAP THEM

your tent/home on-site each night isn’t an option. So, please don’t kick us out of bed because we were unable to make it down for the impeccably-named Crosstitution as well as the nearly-as-impeccably-named Biological Monstrosity and Rumpelstiltskin

Grinder for their way-too-early sets. Our return coincided with **Full Of Hell**. Playing a typically short and direct set, the Maryland noise grinders have obviously taken cues from their Merzbow collaboration, but could use a bit more tightening up of the between-song space.

Hardcore granddads **Psycho** deliver a vintage three chord pummeling that probably sounds the same now as they did when they played Seth Putnam’s wedding (which they did!), after which **Total Fucking Destruction** deliver their groovin’ and shufflin’ classic rock inflected take on grind. Tough call as to who played more tunes, them or Agathocles.

It’s been this hack’s long held opinion that Montréal’s **Soothsayer** are one of thrash metal’s greatest shoulda-coulda stories to which negative circumstance thrust forward into the band’s collective bung hole. They’ve been back for a few years and have hardly missed a step, especially bassist Simon Genest who bounds around with more energy than he should be allowed and vocalist Stephan Whitton’s spiky leg armour that laughs at Kerry King’s. Their brand of speedy thrash gradually wins over a good number of the skeptical crowd, and when they blast out long-standing highlights like ‘Death Radiation’ and ‘Troops Of Hate’, it was the perfect elixir for perpetual youth. France’s **Inhumate** also pull a good portion of those down front onto the stage and create a whirling dervish with their war-like death/grind, but as we are personally unfamiliar with their works, we have to ask: what was up with that coughing/crying song intro?

New York-based tech-death crew **Malignancy** are surprisingly entertaining. Not only does the dense complexity of their music come across much more accessible and penetrable in the live arena – hell, we’re pretty sure we even heard a groove or two in there! – but front throat Danny Nelson connects with the crowd via amiable and humorous stage raps. And where else are you going to see hula girls dancing

on stage and handing out leis to moshers and bangers to a track like ‘Inhuman Grotesqueries’? Over and onto **Broken Hope** who come prepared to force feed their catalogue into Montréal’s maw, but the response to their professionally sculpted presentation is surprisingly muted. Mixing it up with old and new material, and delivering it with all the vigor of a band half their age, the Illinois natives even seem taken aback at the reception, but that doesn’t stop the sweat and growls from flying.

**Trap Them** don’t tour or play live much anymore, so it is with great anticipation that the quartet take to the stage. Soon enough, vocalist Ryan McKenny is subjecting his frame to the sort of abuse and disregard that has prevented him from regularly being able to take to the road in the first place and as soon as the HM-2 buzz sizzles for ‘Salted Crypts’ blood, false teeth, hats, bodies and all sorts of detritus take to the skies in the name of violent, crusty grind fun.

## EPILOGUE

There was much more to this particular version of Obscene Extreme that we missed out on: a exclusive noisecore set by jokers Deche-Charge; a Sunday afternoon meet and greet BBQ; thrash/death kiddos Noisem; the closing ceremonies DJ set; Immolation playing to an exhausted Saturday crowd; and bands with charming monikers like System Shit and Vaginal Addiction.

It certainly was a weekend with overload built into its design. Ferris wheels and shitty overpriced food notwithstanding, it was a festival in the true sense of the word. And while it looks like OE America will remain nomadic, it demonstrated that a good fest isn’t just about rare, exclusive and big name performances fattening up the bill. It’s about how care and knowledge of the music, the scene and its participants go a long way in creating a good time.



TOTAL FUCKING DESTRUCTION

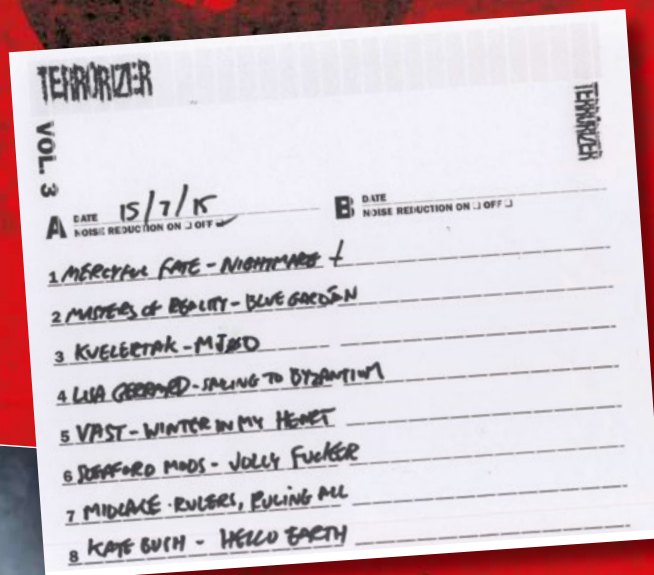


PUTRID PILE



# Mix Tape Mayhem

CURRENTLY TOURING AN ALBUM THAT'S BOUND TO BE BOTHERING MORE THAN A FEW ALBUM OF THE YEAR LISTS, WE ASKED PARADISE LOST'S NICK HOLMES TO TELL US ABOUT HIS FAVOURITE TRACKS



**"I CONSIDER ADULT LIFE TO BE PRETTY RUBBISH, SO THIS SONG REALLY DOES REMIND ME OF BETTER TIMES"**



**MERCYFUL FATE**  
**'Nightmare' FROM 'Don't Break The Oath'**  
(ROADRUNNER, 1984)

"Great song from one of my favorite metal albums. Despite the fact I've

been listening to it for around 30 years I never get bored of it, great playing, buzzsaw guitars, but above all, it's just reassuringly Satanic. The first two Mercyful Fate albums rule. Don't mess with the King."



**MASTERS OF REALITY**  
**'Blue Garden' FROM 'Masters Of Reality'**  
(DEF AMERICAN, 1988)

"Took me a while to get into this

album, [it was a] big departure from the death metal I was listening to at the time, but this song in particular bowled me over. Great production for the time and could easily be a Cream song. The 'heavy' live version doesn't work for me though, I need to hear the weeping wah pedal over that sad chorus."



**KVELERTAK**  
**'Mjød' FROM 'Kvelertak'**  
(INDIE, 2010)

"Great energy in this song, always feels like kind of a hardcore version of AC/DC with Norwegian singing!

Twenty years ago I would definitely have my shirt off in the mosh pit for this one. Nowadays at gigs, I tend to stand at the back moaning about beer prices and checking my phone."



**LISA GERRARD**  
**'Sailing To Byzantium' FROM 'Immortal Memory'**  
(4AD, 2004)

"I can get completely lost in Lisa Gerrard's music, she has a

fantastic voice and her music is always so dramatic and dark. Funnily enough, there is a song called 'Paradise Lost' on this album, but I prefer this one. I love listening to this kind of stuff on flights and mind-numbingly boring long journeys."



**VAST**  
**'Winter In My Heart' FROM 'Crimson'**  
(SELF-RELEASE, 2003)

"This is a sad song, great lyrics – gives me goosebumps

just thinking about it. Can't really say I'm a Vast fan as such, but I loved this song from the minute I heard it. Always a sucker for songs that make me want to cry."



**SLEAFORD MODS**  
**'Jolly Fucked' FROM 'Chubbed Up +'**  
(IPECAC, 2014)

"A lot of people I know just

don't get 'em, but I love everything about these guys – great lyrics, they are funny, obnoxious, crass, middle aged and incredibly British. A kind of like a musical version of Viz, although they would probably think I'm a cunt for saying that."



**MIDLAKE**  
**'Rulers, Ruling All Things' FROM 'The Courage Of Others'**  
(BELLA UNION, 2010)

"Love this album, very chilled

and melancholic. Music videos don't mean as much as they used to, but I particularly like the video of this track, the song is a great backdrop for the visuals. Google it!"



**KATE BUSH**  
**'Hello Earth' FROM 'Hounds Of Love'**  
(EMI, 1985)

"Aha! I was lucky enough to see her recently in London,

no one in the crowd was under 40! This song was the high point though, sad, magically haunting and crushingly nostalgic. I consider adult life to be pretty rubbish, so this song really does remind me of better times." 🍷

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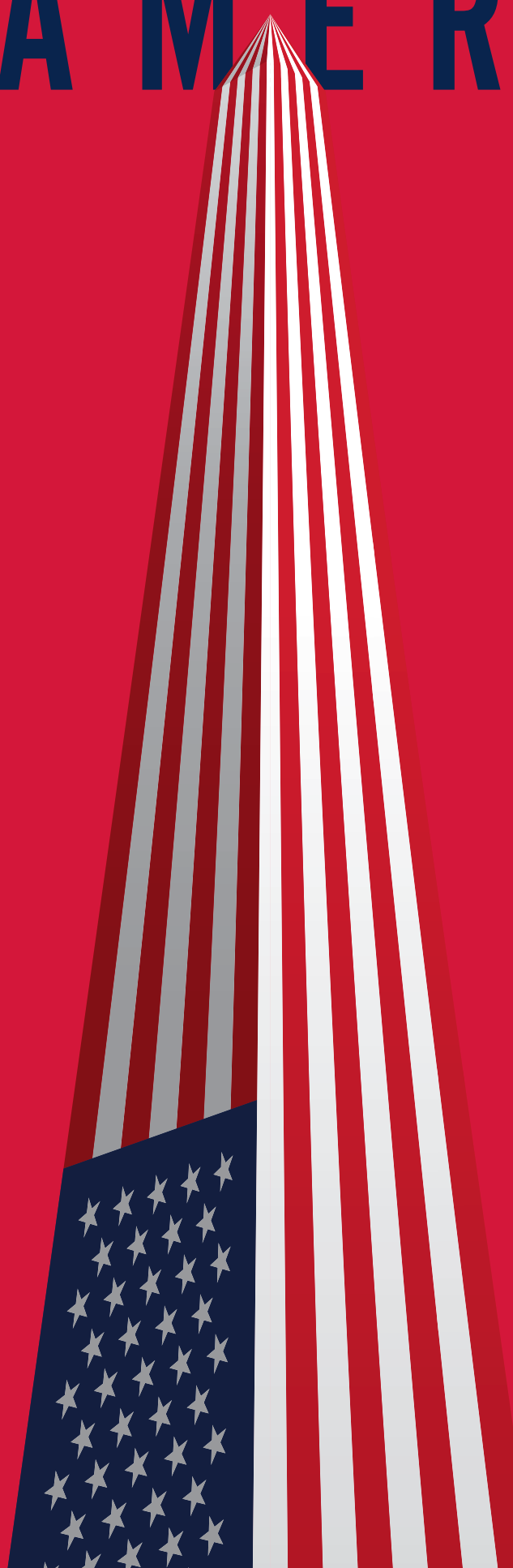
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# SEX HORMONE - SHBG

BY VITRUVIAN MAN

## Sex Hormone Binding Globulin

How annoyed would you be if you were struggling to make ends meet, yet your bank account looked quite healthy? All that much needed cash was tied up in some ISA or saving scheme but was inaccessible. The bank was perfectly happy, but you had to just struggle on. Quite aggrieved, I expect. I would be. Bloody bankers...

Having an elevated level of SHBG (sex hormone binding globulin) can be very similar to dodgy bankers. It takes your hard earned testosterone, locks it away and only pays out a crappy 2% interest rate. This 2% is all you have available to spend at any time.

Around half (usually it's about 45%) of all testosterone is bound to SHBG. Slightly more is bound to albumin (a protein produced by the liver). This distribution is nearly equal, despite the fact there is so much more albumin than there is SHBG. Testosterone just very much prefers to be bound with SHBG which evens things out. This binding allows testosterone to be safely transported around the body and not get used up. Instead testosterone is gradually released in suitable amounts at the right time. Only about 2% at any time is 'free' to do its job.

Usually this is not a problem. However, it can be when total testosterone levels are within normal ranges and SHBG is high. A higher proportion of the total testosterone is 'bound' and

inactive. It's sitting there but there's nothing you can do with it. Sometimes the body compensates for this by increasing total testosterone. Sometimes not.

So despite a normal total testosterone value, your free testosterone is significantly reduced. This can cause the same symptoms of hypogonadism (low testosterone) such as lack of libido, depression and fatigue. What's worse, a cursory look at only the total testosterone levels will overlook the hypogonadism completely! It does look normal after all. This can prevent a correct diagnosis and render the patient ineligible for testosterone replacement therapy. It is always important to include SHBG in any hormone profiling. We need to know if the levels are normal. But what if the levels of SHBG are high?

There may be a case for exploring the prescribing mesterolone (Pro-Viron) in this instance. This, of course, is solely at the discretion of the specialist. Pro-Viron is a synthetic male sex hormone. It's not very anabolic but does bind very strongly to SHBG. By doing so leaves even more testosterone effectively free or 'unbound'.

One cause of raised SHBG can be previous anabolic steroid use. Steroid use will lower SHBG whilst on cycle, but it will leap back up again. An impaired liver and raised oestrogen levels will also increase SHBG. Steroid use can result in this, too.

An oestrogen level test and liver function are required to rule out causes of elevated SHBG. Too many circulating thyroid hormones are

also a contributing factor. The non-prescribed and unsupervised use of thyroid drugs must be avoided.

The best way to address the concern of high SHBG levels is naturally.

We know that liver damage can be a contributing factor. Avoid unnecessary medication or drug use which can be harmful to the liver. Not being overweight helps too. By overweight I mean fat. Sorry to go all PC on you there. The more fat there is being carried, the greater the conversion of testosterone to oestrogen. This results in a vicious cycle where testosterone continues to drop, fat deposits are increased and then so too is oestrogen.

A sensible training regimen that addresses both fat loss and muscle gains helps a lot. There are numerous references to supplementing the diet with fish oils that make a lot of sense.

Vitamin D levels that are within normal ranges will assist to lower SHBG. As vitamin D is a partly synthesised by the body in response to sunlight, many in the UK are deficient. UK weather is shite. The other source of Vit D is from diet, mainly through animal products such as fish, eggs and meat. Supplementing with Vit D is recommended and should help. Blood levels of vitamin D should not fall below 25 nmol/L. New recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) include an intake of 10 ug (micrograms) for all the population over 1 year old. It's clearly rather important stuff. And the suggestion is we're not getting enough. Body building doses are reported to be between 25-75 ug. A dose of 25ug is the same as 1000 IU, just to complicate things...

An adequate protein intake does have a positive impact on SHBG. Ensure a daily intake of around 2 grams per kilogram of body weight.

Other suggestions include stinging nettle and boron as supplements. I've yet to see satisfactory evidence so can't suggest these as helpful options.

Left alone SHBG will rise as we age. Employing the correct use of brief, intense and infrequent training, coupled with sensible nutrition should keep the wolf from the door. And those bloody banker's hands off your testosterone account.

Aaron Carnahan

Vitruvian Man

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